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JOHN OF ENGLAND.

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

BY HENRY CURLING,

AUTHOR OF

“THE SOLDIER OF FORTUNE.”

Now powers from home, and discontents at home,
Meet in one line; and vast confusion waits
(As doth a raven on a sick-fallen beast),
The imminent decay of wrested pomp.
Now happy he whose cloak and cincture can
Hold out this tempest.
A thousand businesses are brief in hand,
And heaven itself doth frown upon the land.

KING JOHN.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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JOHN OF ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.

THANET IN THE REIGN OF JOHN.

The posts come tiring on,
And not a man of them brings other news
Than they have learned of me.

SHAKSPERE.

Every minute now
Should be the father of some stratagem.
The times are wild,—contention, like a horse
Full of high feeding, madly hath broke loose,
And bears down all before him.

IBID.

It is our purpose to commence the present
tale in and around a portion of merrie England,
which we conceive to be a familiar spot to the

deep, green bay—where to the lover of history, or to the antiquarian, possesses interest than this spot. Here Saxon and Briton and Roman, have alike encountered face to face, and bloody point to point, at a foot of its verdant surface, but mud and again have been bruised with the hostile paces, from the Roman invasion to the times of the York and Lancastrian wars and civil butcheries.

Gazing from the yellow sands upon that white-faced shore,

“ Whose foot spurns back the ocean’s roaring
And coops from other lands her islanders,”

The spectator becomes peculiarly impressed with the deeds of other days—he feels, indeed

sweeps o'er the dizzy height; such must have been the exact scene, when the watch-fires of the Britons burned upon the wold, and the galleys of Cæsar first appeared in sight.

No remembrance of young England here interferes with the reverie of the wanderer; but lost in dreams of early and shadowy recollection, as the eye traverses the beachy margin of the ocean, and rests upon the sea-built towers of the monastic Reculvers in the distance, he becomes lost in dreams.

For our own part, we must indeed confess to a considerable share of affection towards a portion of our island, which in the stirring periods of the early history of Britain has played so important a part, and we shall therefore make no apology for bringing our actors upon the scene, in the close vicinity of the well-known, lively town of Margate.

In the good old times—

“All times when old are good,”

—and we purpose to go so far back as the reign of “English John”—this town (at present so

large and flourishing) exhibited a very different appearance to that which it now displays.

During the turbulent and troublous reign of John, Margate, together with many other towns upon the shores of Thanet, was indeed but a "*mere gate*:" a miserable looking sea-built hamlet or fishing village, having a watch-tower erected upon the part now designated as the fort—a sort of beacon containing a barrel of pitch in readiness to blaze intelligence of the hostile sail, or peradventure serve as a landmark during rough weather. The veritable sea-gate situate in a gap of the cliff, from which the place derives its name, and which frowning portcullis-like in the chalky height, was a sort of coast-guard substitute to hinder rogues and pirates from coming up into the country, on this side the island, to rob and plunder its inhabitants.

In place, indeed, of the handsome dwellings of the present day, in which so many visitors spend their summer vacation, the reader must imagine a squallid collection of huts.

It was in the immediate vicinity of this town that, on the opening of our story, a spectacle might be seen, that for some reason or the other which has never yet been satisfactorily urged, is never again to be witnessed in England. It was a hawking party. They came on attended by all those "appliances and means" of which the good Lady Berners has so amply and learnedly discoursed—whose book, by the way, we commend to the best attention of our readers. The principal personage of this gallant cavalcade, who rode in front, was a man of some fifty years of age. A moment's glance would have sufficed to convince the spectator that he was no common person. His frame was large and powerful, his bearing majestic, and his countenance noble; and he sate his horse as one who had been more accustomed to the thunder of the captains and the shouting, than to the idle sports of the field or the chase. Sir Gilbert Daundelyonne, for such was his name, was accompanied on either hand by

stand:—

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umptuously capa-
plumed cap, occu-
his familiar seat.

ed horseman effectually
on hawking party; and
contents of the packet, the
anne hastily dismissed his

a youth and a young lady, his son and daughter. There was nothing that may be termed noticeable in the person of the youth ; but his eye must indeed have been dim, or his heart unimpressible, who could have looked unmoved upon the face of Bertha Daundelyonne.

It was not long after they had commenced the sport, when a tumult was heard from the adjacent town. Scenes of violence and uproar were not uncommon in that age, when municipal authorities, although they were strict to punish, were lax to restrain ; but the times were critical, and the present hubbub seemed to engage the attention of the knight, but not sufficiently so to divert him from his pastime.

Dashing past the monastic building of Salmstone, the party presented a noble and stirring picture to the gazer's view. Suddenly, however, as Sir Gilbert Daundelyonne drew up his party and reclaimed his hawk, after a successful flight, a heavily-armed horseman, clad in com-

plete steel, appeared in the distance, upon the Canterbury road. The furious pace at which he rode proclaimed the import of his errand :—

“ He seemed in coming, to devour the way,”

and as he drew bridle before the party, and sat like a pillar of iron upon his reeking horse, he presented a sealed packet to the knight's hands. The radiant Bertha Daundelyonne meanwhile took the opportunity of exchanging a few words with the young esquire, a youth of about eighteen years of age, who sumptuously caparisoned in furred tunic and plumed cap, occupied his saddle as if it were his familiar seat.

The arrival of the armed horseman effectually spoiled the sport of the hawking party ; and after perusal of the contents of the packet, the Knight of Daundelyonne hastily dismissed his attendants, and commending the stranger to the care and hospitality of his son and daughter, desired them instantly to return to his castle.

As the lady and her brother, accompanied by the messenger, moved off with their train, the knight beckoned his esquire to his side, and held brief converse with him on the subject of the letter he had received.

“Clinton,” said he, “I find here that war is proclaimed, somewhat on the sudden, with France; nay, so tardy hath been the coming of all news to our island, that the King, with his power, has already set forth, and is advancing towards this part of the coast. My instructions meantime take me towards Dover with all the speed I can make, as the Cinque Ports must be looked to immediately, though we ourselves should lack men for our own towers. Make, therefore, good Clinton, for the town yonder without delay; draw together what retainers of our own you can readily collect, put them under charge of the good knight, Geoffrey de Lacy, and despatch them to Sandwich with all speed.”

The young esquire, who cap in hand had listened to the instructions of the stately knight bending forward in his saddle, was about to

dash the spur in his horse's flanks, when the latter again addressed him.

"Yet stay, good Clinton," he continued, "I have here further powers from Hubert de Burgh, who comes on with the King. He bids me forthwith bring round from Dover to the Sandwich haven certain vessels now lying in the former port, in order to embark the war engines expected from the tower. To you I intrust this latter service. You will, therefore, join me at Dover after executing your present commission. Away, good youth, the spirit of the times must teach us haste."

The Daundelyonnes were a fierce and martial race. The present knight was a fine specimen of his order. The news of the coming strife had aroused all his ardour; he raised himself in his saddle—stretched forth his gauntleted hand, and reining in his steed, struck him fiercely with the spur, till he bounded into the air, then turning his horse's head towards the Sandwich flats, he was quickly out of sight, whilst his esquire with equal haste made for Margate.

Arrived there the thoughts of the youth were for the moment distracted from his mission by the revolting scene he beheld.

A belief in witchcraft was in that ignorant age so prevalent, that neither station nor sex was any bar to persecution, if once suspicion fastened itself upon the victim. In the present instance, a crooked hag, with age and poverty grown into a hoop, was being hurried along by the rude hands of an excited mob, together with a young girl, whose lovely features and form ought to have procured her at least some show of mercy. As the rider spurred amongst the throng, his eye caught this bright form in the clutch of ruffians. He reined in his horse, leaped from the saddle, and as a sort of constable, bearing upon his doublet the emblazoned badge of the Cinque Ports, and armed with a halbert, was dragging the girl along, he confronted him and bade him desist.

"How now, sirrah," he said, "wherefore this brutal conduct towards one so young and innocent; wouldst thou murder the poor child? Unhand her, caitiff!" he continued, as

the man clutched his prisoner more firmly, and seemed inclined to question the right of his interference, "loosen your grasp upon her arm, or, by St. Paul, I'll drive my dagger in your teeth."

"She's a witch, my Lord," returned the man-at-arms; "trust not her cunning beauty. She has been condemned and tried; we've our orders from the head-borough to burn her, together with that limb of the devil coming on behind. There's a bonfire i' the Dane, but we're going first to put them to their purgation, and fling them into the Guestling; if they swim, good: they may get out an they can; if they sink, they're guilty, and we shall hook 'em out and burn 'em in yonder fire."

"Stand back, hounds," cried the young esquire, as the mob pressed upon him, "and do you, sirrah, release the girl, as I direct."

"Truly, your honour," said the constable, "if you say so, it must be done; but body o' me, she's a witch, I tell you, and if I release her now from custody, she'll be torn in pieces

by the mob. See, even now they grow impatient, and if we get not on with the work in hand, we shall all suffer."

The mob, indeed, then ever eager for scenes of blood, but who had been stayed by respect for the esquire of a Daundelyonne, now showed symptoms of executing summary vengeance upon their victim. The old hag, who had, in fact, been quite at their mercy during the foregoing discussion, was almost past praying for, and had atoned for all the cattle she had murrained, and the people she had cramped. The youth saw he should scarcely be able to save the girl, whose beauty had made an impression upon him, unless he bestirred himself in earnest.

Drawing his hunting-blade from its sheath, in an instant he cleared a space around him, and as the burly constable also stepped back before his glittering steel and fierce eye, he caught the girl up in his arms, and placing her upon the pommel of the saddle, sprang lightly upon his steed; then upsetting the constable with the shoulder of the animal, he dashed like a thunder-

bolt through the press, making for the spot where we have before seen his party engaged in the sport of hawking.

As the youth rapidly quitted the town with his lovely burthen, who from ill usage and fear was almost in a fainting state, he gazed with wonder upon her matchless beauty, and drawing bridle beside the monastic towers of Salmstone, the circling walls of which building are still to be seen in this part of the island, he alighted and gently set her upon her feet.

For the first time since he had obeyed the impulse of humanity, and rescued her from death—as he still continued to gaze upon a form, which for grace and loveliness seemed unequalled by any thing he had ever before seen—he began to recollect the mission he had been entrusted with by the good knight he served—the coming of the King's power, and the consequent haste he was ordered to make towards Dover—and as these thoughts pressed upon him, consideration for the helpless state of one so lovely, and what he was himself to do with

the new charge with which he had thus encumbered himself, also began to trouble his mind.

The young esquire, although brave as the steel he wore, was a youth of a gentle disposition, somewhat different from the haughty, overbearing, and turbulent spirits of the young nobles of his day ; and as the maiden gazed upon his handsome features and answered his queries, he felt more and more interested in her helpless condition.

“ I have neither friend nor protector,” she said, “ but the woman they have just killed—no home, but the hut I dare no more return to. Oh ! do not desert me, or you will have released me from the present danger only to abandon me to a worse fate.”

The youth hesitated ; he was perplexed in the extreme ; he knew not what to do. A devil seemed to whisper strange thoughts into his ear, when suddenly the swell of the choir in Salmstone chapel sounded from the building. It seemed a holy monitor to warn him from evil.

“ Ha !” he said, “ I will give you shelter

here; you shall take sanctuary till I return. Yonder fat monk, whom I see approaching, will summon hither the harbinger of the grange; in her charge I can safely leave you."

"And your name?" said the maiden, looking tearfully in his face, "I have never before experienced so much kindness; let me hear the name of one so noble-looking and good, that I may set it in my prayers."

As the youth gazed upon the lovely girl, he resigned her to the female harbinger of Salmstone, with strict charge to tend her well till his return, and applying the spur to his steed, once more galloped into the town.

"I pray you," said the maiden, as she lingered at the gate, "who is yonder good youth?"

"Trouble not yourself about him," said the withered nun, as she drew her in and closed the portal, "such rencontres are dangerous and require *aves* and *credos* to obliterate them. The Lord of Folkstone and Goulstone is nevertheless a good youth: he is esquire to Sir Gilbert Daundelyonne, one who hath kissed the blessed tomb, and fought the holy war in Palestine under

Richard of England. But soldiers are not for such maidens as we to think of ; they are mighty pretty to look at, but like their own weapons, unsafe to meddle with. I have learnt to forget soldiers for many long years ; so must you."

CHAPTER II.

THE COMING WAR.

Ha! majesty! how high thy glory towers,
When the rich blood of kings is set on fire.
O! now doth death line his dead chaps with steel,
The swords of soldiers are his teeth, his fangs,
And now he feasts, mouthing the flesh of men,
In undetermined difference of kings.

SHAKSPERE.

God shall mend my soul,
You'll make a mutiny among my guests.

IBID.

THE period in which we have introduced some of the dramatis personæ of our story upon the scene, was that portion of John's reign, in which Philip the Fair, of France, espousing the cause of the nephew of the English monarch, laid claim in his behalf to the crown of England, together with the

territories of Ireland, Poitiers, Anjou, Touraine, and Maine, bidding the haughty, vindictive, and unscrupulous John to lay aside the sword :—

“ That swayed usurpingly these several titles,
And put the same into young Arthur’s hand.”

It was this somewhat inconsiderate and unweighing demand of the French King, which had caused the sudden rumour of war we have already seen to have reached, by an armed post, the interior of the Isle of Thanet.

The English power was, indeed, on this occasion, “ like lightning in the eyes of France ;” for almost ere the defiance of John had reached the French court, the interruption of his churlish drums, sounding in the vasty fields of France, awoke endeavour for defence. The haughty embassy of Philip had chafed the fierce Norman’s blood ; and to the threat of war held out, in case John refused to allow the title of Arthur of Bretagne, he carried his own answer, backed by thrice fifteen thousand hearts of England’s breed.

It was upon this occasion that John first gave evidence of a spirit and a resolution—a boldness and a celerity which at intervals he displayed in after-life; and which, by reminding the English people of his brother Richard, attached them to his rule. Unfortunately for the man, his passions were stronger than his judgment, and his pleasures were held in greater immediate account than his present reputation or future fame; otherwise there was stuff in him out of which a greater man even than the hero of the lion-heart might have been formed. It is impossible to doubt or to deny that, in addition to his own sins, the sins of his kindred,—as was afterwards the case with Charles I.—were visited upon him. Direct lineal descent was not so much insisted upon in that age, but the people could not forget that the son of his elder brother Geoffrey existed, and that the monarch to whom they paid homage was an usurper. They now remembered the inhuman manner in which the three brothers, Geoffrey, Richard, and their present King, had rebelled

against their father, the great Henry II., a remembrance which had lain dormant whilst Richard occupied the throne, whose social qualities, whose courtesy, and above all, whose bravery, which was indeed heroic, endeared him to his countrymen.

During the reign of Richard, the land had slept with a sense of comparative security. Although he had reigned ten years, hardly twelve months of which were passed in his native country, such was the *prestige* of his name, that, spite of the tyranny of Longchamp and the regency of John, England was, to use a common phrase, "well to do." There was that feeling in the breast of every Englishman, which Shakspeare has so well expressed from the mouth of one of our characters, the heroic Faulconbridge :

" — nought shall make us rue,
If England to itself do rest but true."

Now, however, in the reign of John, a different epoch had arrived. All was gloomy fore-

boding and threatened insecurity throughout the land. Access even to the stronghold of the barons was not easy, except for occasional tournaments and short revels. Ladies, even of the higher ranks, in that unsafe time, were almost as much confined by the care of fathers, as in the East by the jealousy of husbands. The young knight could but rarely steal a glance at the damsel of his own age, and hence women were regarded with a devotional admiration unknown in modern times.

The news of the coming war, meanwhile, spread like wildfire through the Isle of Thanet. Although communication between town and town was both difficult and dangerous, such was its import to the shores of Thanet, that it flew from mouth to mouth like the fiery cross of later days. The palmer, with his cockled hat and staff, carried it to the monastery and hamlet as he wended his painful way—the minstrel sang it in the baronial hall—the mendicant coupled it with his petition for alms, and, as post after post came tiring on, furnished with

fresh tidings to the different families of importance in the island, men gaped and rubbed their elbows with the excitement of the expected commotion.

In Margate, indeed, and the adjacent sea-port towns, the news produced a quick sensation, and occupying the minds of the inhabitants, drove from their thoughts the popular excitement directed against the two persecuted individuals, when the Lord of Folkstone, so opportunely for the safety of one of them, appeared upon the scene.

The inhabitants of the different sea-built towns upon the shores of Thanet, had, indeed, reason to apprehend the breaking out of hostilities. It was no uncommon thing for the walled, ramparted, and well-manned Cinque Ports to be over and anon pounced upon by the falcon swoop of a hostile power, which, after a desperate encounter, left a hot and bleeding sacrifice to the fire-eyed maid of smoky war. But when the foe, under cover of night and negligence, caught an insecure town in their foray, the inhabitants

failing to escape, became the instant victims of brutality and wholesale murder.

The Isle of Thanet, in particular, had been a continual battle-field for many previous centuries; war swept over its surface like the fiery breath of a smoky furnace, and left behind a blackened and charred memento of its fury. Those fair fields on which the crops of the careful husbandman had at sunset waved upon the rich soil, in a few short hours, perhaps, reeked beneath the moon; and as the sea-breeze moaned o'er the umbered furrow, it was impregnated with the pungent effluvium of burnt stacks, huts, and scorched trees, whilst the bodies of the numerous inhabitants, who, dying in strife, had been hurled into the flames of their dwellings, smelt unwholesome in the fitful breeze.

Salmstone Grange, situate a little more than a stone's throw from the town of Margate, antique in appearance as it is in the present day, displayed in the reign of King John a very different aspect. The busy and reforming hands of the Cromwellians have destroyed its dark

... see the portions of the building adapted to the purposes of a modern have a decided semblance to the stables of the prick-eared Round-heads of C day.

At the period in which we resume t of our tale, Salmstone, although situ charming spot, and surrounded by eme ture and smiling down, had a dark, and melancholy look. Its walls were and frowning, speaking of monkish sup intolerance, and priestcraft. The solemn of the shaven monks might be heard fr chaunting the midnight mass, or sinf requiem for the dead. But, although outward austerity and professed sanctity fanaticism and dirty habiliments, the sa

frock of the lazy monks as may be found in these more enlightened times.

Salmstone was part of the ancient possessions of the abbot and convent of St. Augustine, at Canterbury, to the sacristy of which monastery it was appropriated, and in the days of the early Kings of England, the privilege had been granted to the Abbot of St. Augustine's of holding a fair within the manor.

The lands of Salmstone (as pertaining to this establishment) amounted to eighty-nine acres of arable land, so that the fat Abbot of St. Augustine had a valuable piece of church property in this rectory or grange. Many useful charities were, however, performed by the religious community of Salmstone. Each poor wayfarer could claim at least *one dish of dressed pease*, whilst the abbot was under obligation to deliver to the hamlets of St. Lawrence, St. Peter's, and Minster ten marks yearly, and sufficient man's meat and horse meat, on the feast of St. Mildred, St. Bartholomew, and half a dozen other saints' days beside.

When the fair girl, rescued by the young Lord of Folkstone from the fangs of an infuriated and savage mob, was admitted within the gates of Salmstone, the shrewd old nun turned upon her a scrutinizing and inquisitorial glance, and ere she led her into the harbinge of the building, proceeded to gratify a little harmless curiosity. The ancient dame, although now the bride of heaven, devoted to charitable deeds, and clad in coarse weeds and pinched wimple, had doubtless in early life played her part in the world as great a sinner as she now professed herself a saint. She was as much struck with the extraordinary beauty, both in face and form, of the young female thus suddenly left in her charge, as the introducer himself had been.

The girl was neither unbecomingly nor ill-clothed; on the contrary, she wore a short tunic over a gown of rather fantastic fashion, and scarlet hose and russet sandals were upon her legs and feet. Her hair, which was of the richest brown, now hanging in some disorder

over her shoulders, half covered her Juno-like form, whilst the lips—that never opened but to show the pearly teeth within—the faultless nose, dark eyes, cheek of cream, and almost regal forehead, altogether presented a picture of female excellence, which seen, “became a part of sight.”

The old nun, whose cloistered life had not altogether divested her of that envy which the aged and ugly feel towards the young and handsome, gazed with some little ill humour, mixed with surprise: “Hum,” she said, as she turned sharply upon the girl, after closing the gate, “the garb of a timbrel player and the brow of a Queen. I’m not sure I was right in admitting you here, young woman. Say, whence came ye, and why thus scampering over the island with the Esquire of a Daundelyonne, like some knight-errant with his leman tacked to his horse’s crupper? ’Twere best, I trow, to thrust ye from the door, in place of giving ye sanctuary at yonder youth’s request. This is a refuge for the destitute, a harbour of comfort

and repose for the sick and sorry, not a trysting place for the youthful and vain. There abide none here but the miserable, the world-sick, and the hopeless."

"The miserable have no medicine but hope," returned the girl, "I am destitute, friendless, and unhappy. All I crave is shelter from persecution for a brief space; deny it me, and I perish."

"Enough," said the nun. "A brief shelter I can grant ye. Follow, and you shall find it."

The harbinge of Salmstone consisted of a long range of single cells, and one large hall, for the accommodation and lodgment of pilgrims and wayfarers. This portion of the monastery stood somewhat behind the main building. When the young girl was introduced into the interior, she found herself in a gloomy stone-built, low-roofed, and arched apartment. A sort of dresser was in the midst. An ample fire blazed upon the hearth, and several mendicants, one or two wandering minstrels of the commoner sort, and a gaunt-looking pilgrim, were its tenants.

"Here," said the nun, "you will find food and shelter. I am not permitted to grant a long stay to any except the sick. If, however, you choose to assist me in my duties, your task, like mine, will be to tend the traveller and administer to the wants of the feeble. In that case, I can afford you a few days' shelter under this roof."

As the young female, after thanking the old nun, seated herself upon a sort of settle beside the fire, and refreshed herself from the food placed before her, she became, unconsciously, the subject of considerable observation in the harbinge. "What is she?" passed from mouth to mouth in a whisper, and as several of the monks of the grange passed through the apartment, they stopped with surprise to gaze upon her form and features. Beauty provoketh thieves sooner than gold, it is said, and even beneath the dark roof of a convent, innocence, unprotected, may be endangered.

Fat old Father Eustace compared notes with brother John, whilst the meagre and hungry-

looking brother Gregory uttered an exclamation of surprise to portly Paul. "Holy Mother!" said little Peter, "but here's a vision of paradise come amongst our ugly brotherhood. Oh! for a painter, to make a drawing of the Virgin for our chapel. Who, and what can she be?"

"I'll tell you," said the jester of Daundelyonne Castle, who had been with the hawking party, and just at that moment entered the harbinger, "what she is in a trice, most reverend fathers and sanctimonious brothers—she's neither more nor less than the attendant of Old Mother Midnight, the conjurer, who has been over in Margate spelling fortunes till she got herself apprehended for witchcraft. The lass is some poor creature she stole in early youth from her parents. Best leave this place," he continued in a whisper, gliding close to her, "or you may chance to find yourself in durance vile. There's as much danger for one of your profession and beauty here, as amongst the rabble. A word to the wise. Salmstone hath strong

walls and deep dungeons The night-shriek hath been heard before now in the breeze around. You understand me? I say nothing; but if ever the fiend laughs at all, it must be at hypocrites. They are his faithful dupes; they serve him without wages, and submit to greater mortifications for his sake than the sincerest christian to get to heaven.' Now, my masters," he continued aloud, "I want a cup of your liquor to wet my cock's-comb, and then I'll tell you the news abroad this morning, ere I foot it towards Daundelyonne "

The monks looked at each other at the intelligence of the jester, and shook their pale bald heads.

"Witchcraft! quotha," said Father Peter, "body o' me, I feel quite queer. What a grace there is about her. She steps like a fawn upon the hill-side. Witchcraft!" said little Peter, telling his beads with amazing rapidity, "by'r lady, I think I shall be bewitched myself, ere long. I never saw such luxuriant locks even in a picture. St. Bride, St. Benedict, St. Rada-

gund, and St. Christopher be amongst us all !
I vow to our chapel six tapers, weighing three-fourths of a pound of wax each, to keep us clear of utter confusion in the convent.

“ I knew how it would be,” said the jester, finishing off his draught, “ the convent’s in a state of mutiny already, and the monks demented. There’s the great bell been tolling for mass for the last half-hour in the chapel, and not one of these bullet-headed staring idiots can hear it. A rope’s end, ye sinners, a rope’s end !” he shouted as he left the apartment, “ your backs will suffer for this, my masters all. Here comes the superior.”

CHAPTER III.

DAUNDELYONNE CASTLE IN THE REIGN OF
JOHN.

O worthy fool ! Motley's the only wear.
What fool is this ?
One that hath been a courtier
And says, if ladies be but young and fair
They have the gift to know it : and, in his brain,
Which is as dry as the remainder biscuit
After a voyage,—he hath strange places cramm'd
With observation, the which he vents
In mangled forms.—

SHAKSPERE.

THE ancient seat of Daundelyonne stood, in the year 1200, about half a mile from the sea-shore, and consisted of a strong keep with several flanking towers, a court-yard and a moat, the whole being encompassed by a massive wall.

The green mounds, however, which served to mark its very ruins are now hidden from view. A modern rick-yard pens the steer and sheep, where the court-yard often rang to the warriors' clanking stride, and on the site of the donjon-keep of the once proud family of Daundelyonne, stands a modern farm-house. Nay, many a race since theirs has died out and been forgotten upon the spot which once owned them as Lords; which witnessed all the pomp and circumstance of their feudal pride—saw the musterings and gatherings of their men-at-arms—and heard the war-cry upon the battlements of their own towers.

The ancestor of Sir Gilbert Daundelyonne, we have mentioned in this veritable story, had helped Duke William with his good sword at Hastings, and received a grant of the estate for his services on that memorable day.

The family of Sir Gilbert consisted at this period of a son and a daughter, his wife having died some years before. During the preceding reign, the two children had been left pretty much to their own guidance. Sir Gilbert,

himself, then absent in the Holy Land with Richard the First, had entrusted his family and domains to the care of his younger brother, Marcellus Daundelyonne, who was Abbot of St. Augustine's, at Canterbury. The churchman, however, had rather neglected this sacred charge, insomuch that, saving and excepting his having despatched a portly priest to superintend the education of his nephew and niece, and paid periodical visits to them himself when he visited the different chapels, hermitages, and monasteries in Thanet, he never troubled himself about Daundelyonne. The children, therefore, had been early taught to consider themselves as beyond all control. They had been cradled in the luxury and splendour of a feudal chieftain's halls, and had learned to consider themselves as a sort of petty princes in the land.

The superintendence of the Abbot of St. Augustine over the establishment was just sufficient to keep the inferior officers in a state of discipline, and the offspring of his brother from being perchance clapped in their own dun-

men left them pretty much to their nations as to the prosecution of their

Bertha Daundelyonne could embroider and even work the tapestry and hang room ; she could also dance a coura her missal, and was well versed in the lore and minstrelsy of the time. She a hawk, too, and back a courser with lier in Kent ; whilst Hugo, the son, w in all the exercises of chivalry, had something from the tuition of the cl whom Marcellus Daundelyonne had and was, indeed, for that age, quite youth. When Sir Gilbert, therefore, at mencement of John's reign, wandered he seat in Thanet—after having left all his upon the plains of Asia, and hung un l

be dissatisfied, at the first glance, with the administration of those he had left in charge of his estate and family during his absence.

The knight of Daundelyonne was, indeed, a man of a somewhat different disposition from many of the Norman nobles then exercising sway throughout the kingdom. He was, it is true, haughty and overbearing in style and manner with his equals, and even unbending and stern towards his superiors in rank, but to his dependents and inferiors his disposition was sweet as summer. His family pride was enormous. He considered a Daundelyonne as fit company for an emperor ; and, although in comparison to the possessions of the Salisburys, the Warwicks, the Norfolks, and the Pembrokes of that reign, his domain and tower in Kent were but a franklin's farm, he imagined that his name alone was an infinite thing in the balance, and outweighed the broad acres and battlements of many a *parvenu* baron, whose title had never been heard of before Hastings was won.

Bertha Daundelyonne partook of all her

father's pride. She was the haughtiest damsel not only in Kent, but in all England to boot. Unmatched in beauty, scarcely nineteen years of age, her name was already celebrated by the deeds of the bravest of every Court in Christendom. Knights wore her colours in the tournament, the revel and the ball, wherever balls, revels and tournaments were held, and this too without her ever having been a hundred miles from her father's towers. Nay, such was the fame of her excelling beauty, that many a champion who had never beheld her, recollecting that a knight without a mistress is as incomplete as a tree without leaves or fruit, from her reputation alone, had sworn himself her devoted slave, and had died transfixed in the lists, obstinately maintaining Bertha Daundelyonne, with his expiring breath, peerless throughout the world.

Daundelyonne Castle was principally built of bricks and flints in rows. Its walls massive and strong, were battlemented and loop-holed. Over the main entrance, which has been considerably altered since John's reign, may yet

be observed the family arms, in which the lion's head with teeth displayed, bears a conspicuous place.

On the right side of the first gate is a smaller entrance for common purposes, and at its right corner is carved a blank escutcheon, whilst on the left hand is a demi-lion rampant, with a scroll issuing from his mouth, whereon is carved the family name of which the bearers were so proud, "**Daundelyonne**;" a name, which shouted in the raging field, had oftentimes carried as much terror to the foeman's heart, as if the veritable beast of prey, from which it was derived, had shown his fangs in the *melée*.

On the evening of the day following the events we have before narrated, the banner of the Daundelyonnes fluttered from tower and turret in the furious blast. The gates were carefully closed in the absence of Sir Gilbert, and a jealous watch was kept both sea and landward; each stranger and wayfarer was put to his answer, and although messengers and chance-visitors were constantly arriving and craving

nung around with flags, armour, and trophies of the principal inhabitants of the castle at the evening meal. A large fire threw forth a ruddy glow from the curling smoke from the huge cavernous chimney, in the maw the blast piped loud and reaching ear, whilst several lay dreaming of the chase upon the pavement before the bay.

During the temporary absence of the king, who was now hourly expected, the queen presided at a table which was set on a common board, and stood upon the upper end of the hall: the king occupied a seat behind him.

London—one Walter Mauluc an esquire of Poitou, who afterwards obtained a dreadful notoriety from his participation in the murder of the young Duke of Brittany, and who was at that time (although a mere adventurer in England, with nothing but his sword and unscrupulous conscience to recommend him), making rapid strides in the good graces of John. Like most foreigners, the manners of Walter Mauluc were somewhat forward, and at the present moment he was doing his endeavour to make himself agreeable by his attentions (carefully tendered towards one so proud,) to the peerless and haughty Bertha; an attention he was the more able to insinuate, as the young Hugo was rather in a *distrain* and angry mood, and the huge churchman was so much engaged in the constant exercise of his jaws upon the large masses of meat he put between them, together with the capacious draughts he swallowed, that although he was all eyes and teeth, nearly choking in his efforts every five minutes of the repast, he could bestow no attention upon anything but the viands before him.

•

smiting at the hounds, with
savoury morsels, and every
the jester, who had been absent
night from the castle.

“ Now, by the sky that
Hugo, “ that scurvy banterer
the whip for this. I marvel
you cram yourself so fast,—
man, there, and hand him
Sir Mauluc, I pledge you in
the hours be short till we be
in the flowery fields of Britta

“ The royal preparation
makes some stir,” returned

“ Already, I should think, the
power must have reached Ro-

“ Good,” returned Hugo

one seen the varlet Gondibert? None. I thought so. Let a man-at-arms mount and scour the island for him. By my halidom, he's always now either sotting amongst the lazy brotherhood of Salmstone, or gossiping with the landlord of the 'Chequers,' at Monkton. Away! I say, scour the county, and bring him in, dead or alive."

"He saves your labour," said the jester, entering at that moment in company with a youthful page, whose features were half hidden in the hood of his doublet.—"We are bounden to you, Sir," he added; "but the thong and our hide are divorced. Your father ne'er applied it; neither dare his son."

The jester of Daundelyonne was indeed a privileged person; he was a great favourite with the old knight, and using his folly like a stalking-horse, generally spoke harsh truths to the household, for which none cared to reprove him.

"Thou hast been regaling thyself with thy gossips at Monkton, Sir knave," said Hugo, "whilst we have been shut up here according

...making a reference to the
nion, as he invited him to a
bench beneath the cavernous
be stirring times ; and stirring
men. I'll get me a sword in
these wars. There'll soon be
heads, I trow. Ahem ! I finish
here."

" What say those men with
talked, sirrah ?" inquired Hugh

" Your worship is to know
classes of men in the world
whom every one would wish
whom every body does talk of
small minority that constitute

" And what," inquired Mr.
class say, most material, Sir ?"

tinued, " consists of those whom no one wishes to talk *to*, and whom no one does talk *of*; these are that vast majority constituting *the little*. Laugh at yourself, Sir priest, you'll find the subject inexhaustible. The *third* class is made up of those whom every body talks *of*, but nobody talks *to*; these constitute *the knaves*. More grace to ye, Sir Mauluc. I drink to your worship."

" I return your pledge," said the esquire.

" The *fourth* class is composed," continued the jester, " of those whom every body talks *to*, but whom nobody talks *of*, and these constitute *the fools*."

" But I marvel at our all sitting here so long over our flagons," he said, rising from his seat, " when from the battlements may be viewed the royal vessels now passing these shores for the Sandwich haven, laden, as report says, with the war-engines from the Tower of London. I saw them myself as I came hitherward, a glorious convoy, tossing like huge floating castles on the deep; their bellying sails gaudy with the arms of England, and their decks bristling with

There's the Queen Mother and
Lady Blanche of Spain, and
humours of the land. There
than heads soon, as I said
lady," he continued, approaching
except the majordomo, the
some men-at-arms, were all there
hall). "I crave your Ladyship's
protection for this youthful page.
I will kneel, and kiss the lady's hand.

The page then threw back
his head, whilst the Lady Bertha looked
in surprise at a countenance which
and beauty surpassed even
his face.

"Who, and what is he,
inquired as she turned to the

vowed to secrecy ; but you will find him both useful and faithful, and as we are all bound for France, such an attendant is necessary."

" Rise," said the Lady Bertha, extending her hand for the page to kiss, " I entertain you for my follower. Hark !" she continued, as the faint blast of a horn was heard without, " My father—I know his trumpet."

The next minute, the massive door at the lower end of the hall swung open. " Daundelyonne !" was shouted by the sentinel on duty, and Sir Gilbert, accompanied by the Lord of Folkstone and half a dozen knights, armed in complete steel, clattered into the apartment.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PAGE OF DAUNDELYONNE.

They shall yet belie thy happy years
That say thou art a man. Diana's lip
Is not more smooth and rubrous : thy small pipe
Is as the maiden's organ, shrill and sound,
And all is semblative a woman's part.

SHAKSPERE.

Are you a comedian ?

No, my profound heart : and yet by the very fangs of
malice, I swear, I am not that I play.

IBID.

THE young Lord of Folkstone and Goulstone,
and Bertha Daundelyonne had been long
engaged to wed. They had been contracted in
early youth. The father of the young esquire,
whose domains were ample, had died at the
siege of Acre. He was, indeed, one of the first
to mount the breach, where he was seen in the

dear light of the Greek fire, hemmed in and almost alone among the Infidels, numbers of whom he slew ere he himself was overthrown. Sir Gilbert Daundelyonne had sprung to his aid, brought him off in his arms, and received his dying request that the youth, his son, might have the benefit of his care and education in arms. Hence it was that the young Lord of Folkstone and Goulstone, at this time only eighteen years of age, rode as the esquire of a Daundelyonne.

Although, however, the Lady Bertha and Lord Folkstone, both of whom as we have seen were favoured by nature and fortune, were thus early contracted, strange to say, love came not between them. They were both eminently handsome, well-born, and rich. The very lands of the Daundelyonnes and Folkstones joined.

The mother of the young esquire—who was as anxious for the match as Sir Gilbert himself—resided in her son's castle of Goulstone, near Ashe. She had taken great pains to paint her son's virtues to Bertha in the most favourable light, and had also recommended the beautiful

... to the youth
arose from a difference of di
was that their love "chosen
seemed not to grow to any he

The night on which Sir Gi
castle was one of great prep
lyonne. Orders were issued
march at early dawn towa
embark for Calais ; the who
and men-at-arms, except such
sufficient for the garrison of
ordered on the expedition.
tended for France was entirely
and bill-men remaining at hom

On the evening of Sir Gilbe
all was preparation for the ma
lady Bertha sat in her chamb

...

The youth whose beauty and elegance seemed to make a greater impression on her the more she regarded him, appeared as accomplished as he was handsome. He played and sang like a troubadour : his conversation was the most amusing and edifying she had ever listened to ; and having in his chequered life wandered in many foreign lands, he not only spoke several languages, but described the manners and customs of the countries he had visited with peculiar facility. At one moment he danced like the Spaniard ; at the next, he touched the cittern to a lay of the Italian. The lady Bertha, enraptured with what she saw, could indeed have said with Florizel, whilst she listened to his eloquent talk :—

“ When you speak,
I'd have you do so ever ; when you sing,
I'd have you buy and sell so ; so give alms,
Pray so ; and for the ordering your affairs,
To sing them too : when you do dance, I wish you
A wave o' the sea, that you might ever do
Nothing but that.

“ Such your doings
So singular in each particular,
Crown what you are doing in the present deed,
That all your acts are princes.”

...and even the name of
hopelessly and irrecoverably in
a young varlet whom her father
picked up in his wanderings,
notwithstanding the elegance
his noble carriage, nothing but
some gipsy timbrel camp, wholly
stolen from a hovel in
through the world.

“ O love ! how perfect is thy

The sun had sunk to rest,
winds of a gusty day had hardl
Bertha, her maidens having
her chair, sat beside the wind
over the pleasure of the cæ
sea, listening to the minstrelsy

making ready trunk-mails and other furniture. Meanwhile, the subsiding wind sounded amongst the tall yew trees of the pleasaunce in a sort of dreary whisper, as the last tones of the page's cittern echoed through the apartments which Bertha inhabited. The page had just finished an English ditty which had especially charmed the lady; scarcely daring to breathe whilst the song lasted, lest she should lose a word, Bertha desired the page to recommence it. As he prepared to do so, there was a mischievous smile upon his features, whilst he gazed on the large blue eyes and half open mouths of the listening and admiring maidens. Some inward thought seemed to amuse his fancy, and he bent down his head and let the rich brown curls half hide his features, in order to conceal his growing merriment.

Presently, however, he raised his bright face, shook back his long curls, preluded upon his cittern, and once more lifting his voice, sang the following song with exquisite taste and feeling:—

whose beauty him

Hope fell from him
When from his
Man first was driven
Sadly to roam
Until his hour shot

Alas! can Hope
That to us clings
For ever cope
With all the sting
That life around us

Or long repel
The busy fears
That paint too well
The coming years
Already dimmed with

Yes, fondly still,
Brighter than ever
Midst every ill
Nothing can sever
The light that leaves

ANITA

The page ceased, and the listeners entranced by the melody continued to gaze with silence upon the performer. He himself appeared lost to the present moment, and as he stood with the instrument in his hand gazing vacantly upon the arras of the apartment, winters of memory appeared to pass over his soul.

The lady Bertha at length broke the silence.

"Your song," she said, "is simple, fair youth; but you have the trick of giving it exquisite effect by the manner in which you intonate the words. You spoke in it of loss of friends, of all you have loved. Can one so young have experienced misfortune so heavy? What is your history?"

"I know but little of it, lady," said the page, "more than pertains to servitude and sorrow."

"And your parents," said the lady Bertha, "where dwelt they, and what was their calling? Methinks," she added aside to her favourite maiden, as she bent forward to catch the answer,

so gallant a figure can scarcely be of aught but noble birth."

"Of my parentage, lady," said the page, "I have no knowledge; and amongst those with whom I have dwelt, I have not even dared to own my recollections of infancy. It has been industriously impressed upon my mind that all my relatives lie in the cold grave; but in truth I have seldom ventured to make inquiry, as blows have been my only answer on such occasions. I yet retain, however, early and shadowy recollections of a life far different from that in which the greater part of my youth has been passed.

"I remember well the luxury and grandeur in which my childhood was cradled. And the tenderness of a mother's care, suddenly superseded by the frightful harshness of the rude and common barbarism, of vulgar manners, and treatment, has been branded into my memory. The blows which answered the terrified shrieks of an indulged child, upon finding itself transferred from tender care to rough usage, from heavenly

faces to demoniac and savage regard, can never be effaced."

"Poor lad ! thou hast been stolen in early youth," said Bertha.

"I doubt it not," said the page, sadly ; "and no sort of clue now remains, I fear, whereby to trace my parentage."

"What were those with whom you last dwelt," said Bertha, "and whom you suspect of so foul an act ?"

"A sort of Bohemian vagrants," said the page, "who traversed the country to attend on wakes and fairs, and play in the masques and revels of the castle courts of England and Normandy. By them from infancy I have been educated in the mysteries of their craft.

"Forbear, sirrah," said the jester, at that moment entering the apartment. "How now, mistress mine?" he continued, stepping up to Bertha. "Upon your promise of not sifting the history of this varlet, I gave him to your care. And you, Sir," he said, turning and again addressing the youth aside, "did I not

warn you that you were to be naught here? I snatched you from perdition but a couple of hours since; your own indiscretion was now about to lead both of us into a fearful scrape. An' the churchmen of Salmstone find they have been juggled out of a victim, ere we set the seas between us and Britain, you'll scarce escape their dungeons a second time, I promise ye. But I expected to have found the Lord of Folkstone here, lady," he continued, looking round the apartment; "hath he not been with you since his return? Sir Gilbert bade me seek him here."

"The Lord of Folkstone," said Bertha, haughtily, "hath not thought fit to turn his steps towards this wing of the castle, or even to exchange greeting with me since his return. Doubtless he conceives it unnecessary to pay even common attention to one towards whom he feels a sort of duty. The hoof-tread of his departing steed clattered in the court as I left the hall. Seek for him at Manstone Court, whispering a soft tale in Julia de Manstone's ear, ere he depart for France, and you will perchance find

him. I have little of his thoughts or company, I trow, at Daundelyonne."

The jester regarded her with a steady gaze for a brief space; he then turned his keen eye upon the youthful page who stood behind her, and smiled.

"Pride was the devil's fault," he muttered to himself; "but, methinks, of all the marvellous works of the Deity, there can be nothing more astonishing to the angels than a proud woman. Ahem—lady," he continued aloud, "I bear a message from your father. We start to-morrow ere the rising sun gild the sky. He desires, therefore, that you would seek early the refreshment of a few hours' repose."

"He shall be obeyed," said Bertha, preparing to dismiss her maidens. "Order a cup of wine to be served for this youth in my apartment. Ere I dismiss him, methinks I should like to hear another specimen of his skill."

The jester smiled, and took his leave, after bidding the lady good repose and pleasant dreams. But the lute of the page was heard to

reverberate through the apartments of the western wing of the castle long after the bustle of preparation had subsided in the hall below, and the iron-clad occupants who dozed over the embers on its hearth, had dropped off to slumber.

The Lord of Folkstone, meanwhile, although his presence had been much required at Daundelyonne, on remounting his steed galloped like the wind towards Salmstone Grange.

The adventure he was engaged in ere his departure for Dover, and the extraordinary beauty of the girl he had rescued, had made so startling an impression upon his imagination that, as if there had in reality been some sort of glamour or witchcraft in the matter, his mind was distraught until he could see her again. Stern duty had sent him post haste, as we have seen, towards Dover, but each bound of his horse as he crossed the flats on his road, appeared to remove him further from all he held dear. At length he drew bridle, turned his steed, and gazed back towards Salmstone.

“Strange,” he said, “that the form and features of that poor girl should thus haunt me ! A presentiment of some evil destiny seems wrought up with my thoughts. I would I had not committed her to the charge of yonder convent ! Pshaw !” he continued, as he again struck his horse with the spur, “it can scarce be love I feel towards one so lowly : that were indeed a simple folly.”

Thus thinking, the young esquire endeavoured to banish remembrance of the circumstance from his mind. He quickly gained the town of Stonar, and passing the ferry, crossed over to Sandwich, where he remained to bait his horse for a few minutes, and then pushed on towards Dover. It was, however, all in vain that he endeavoured to banish from his mind the features and form of the lovely girl ; and the moment he found himself released from the duty of attendance upon Sir Gilbert, he remounted his steed, and made for Salmstone Grange like the wind.

A short and rapid gallop brought the young esquire to the gate of Salmstone. The shades

of night had now descended, and the struggling light of the moon, as the fleeting clouds passed rapidly over her bright face, showed ever and anon in varied hue upon the flinty walls of the old monastic grange. At one moment, the dark building presented a sombre and melancholy look ; its Gothic windows and low-arched entrances having a black and portentous appearance ; at the next, as the bright moon suddenly broke forth, and silvered buttress and shafted oriel, tipping the fruit-tree tops which encroached over the orchard wall, and shedding a flood of light across the surrounding pastures, it looked a scene such as an artist loves to portray.

The youth leapt lightly from his steed, and seizing the porter's bell, rang it lustily, when an angry-looking and Bardolphiic visage, full of knobs and tubercles consequent upon savoury pasties and deep potations, was quickly presented at the small opening flanking the gate, whilst at the same moment, several cloth-yard shafts appeared bristling from one or two arrow-slits conveniently placed on either side the gate-house.

"Hallo, there," said the sulky porter of the grange, his voice sounding more harshly than was natural to it through the thickly walled and narrow embrasure. "Hallo, there, I say. Who disturbs the gate-house after hours? We admit none within the walls of Salmstone after curfew, unless by order of the superior, and he is absent at Canterbury;—God forgive me for telling such a lie."

"Nevertheless, you will unbar your gates to me," said the young esquire, "since I have matters of business to treat of, which must be instantly attended to."

"Oh, oh!" said the wily porter; "think of that, my masters; here is a peremptory customer come to confession. Nevertheless gossip, you will name your business, and whence from, or you get no entrance at Salmstone; by the same token we have been molested and threatened with the grange being forced by a rascal mob from the town for the last day. Draw me your arrows to the ear, men," he continued, taking his red face within the tower, and speaking to those above, "I see him now by the light

of the moon ; it's an armed horseman ; and unless he is prepared to give some account of himself, be ready to try the soundness of his chain-mail."

" Either admit me," returned the youth, " or give me speech of the harbinger of the grange. I come to make inquiry after one I left in charge here ; and woe to your own shaven crown, monk, if one hair of the head of her I seek be injured. Take my name and errand at once to your superior, and tell him the Lord of Folkstone craves admittance."

The porter upon this immediately withdrew to do the message, and quickly returning, instantly unbarred the iron-studded door and admitted the young esquire.

CHAPTER V.

THE SEARCH THROUGH THE GRANGE.

I tell thee, churlish priest,
A ministering angel shall my sister be
When thou liest howling.

SHAKSPERE.

"FATHER EUSTACE is at present in the chapel, my Lord," said the porter somewhat more civilly, when he heard the youth's name ; "the monks are at prayers ; but the superior bids me guide you to the parlour of the convent, where he will attend you in a few minutes."

"Not so," said the young noble ; "show me into the harbinger of the grange."

"Seek ye for a young girl who was committed to the charge of the harbinger some three days back?" inquired the porter.

"I do," returned the other, "I seek for the young woman I saved from the fury of a mob in the town."

"And who was condemned to die for witchcraft?" inquired the porter.

"Possibly so," returned the esquire; "where is she?"

"Certainly not at Salmstone," returned the porter doggedly. "Heaven forbid she should be, since in the few hours she did us the favour of a sojourn within these walls, she well nigh bewitched the whole fraternity. Stripes, penance, and prayer have been the portion of the brotherhood ever since."

"Hound!" said the Lord of Folkstone, seizing the porter by the throat, "thou hast not dared to offer further persecution to that fair affliction whom I left in sanctuary in this evil place? Confess, villain; what has become of the maiden, or by St. Radagund of Dover, I'll pluck the intelligence from your throat."

“Loosen your gripe, my Lord,” said the porter; “choking a poor devil is hardly the best means of coming at his secret. But, in sooth, I am unable altogether to satisfy your Lordship’s mind upon this subject. All I can tell you simply is, that whilst the maiden remained in our convent, the brotherhood could do little else but throw sheep’s eyes at her all day long whilst at mass, and praise her beauty whilst at meals. Father Philip and Father Paul got flustered whilst toasting her dark eyes, and Eustace and little Peter fell out and fought during matins. The superior, therefore, had her into his private apartment, in order to see with his own eyes whether she was the offspring of the evil one, or what she really was. Between ourselves, however,” whispered the porter, in a tremulous whisper, “there was, I know, a grave dug that night in the vault beneath the south aisle. The friars have been whipping and praying ever since, and there has been no more word of witch or warlock in the

convent. Besides, the harbinge has |
scraped, and cleaned, and sprinkled,
purified, as if a herd of swine had |
styed there."

The young esquire waited to hear no m
he threw the porter from him, and threa
his way along the stone passages, entered
chapel of the monastery.

The chapel of Salmstone may yet be vic
by the curious in antiquarian research, tho
its windows are now bricked up, and its vai
roof half hidden by the piles of hay and s
with which it is filled. In fact, the t
honoured and venerable edifice now serves
purposes of a modern barn. Could the su
stitious slaves and devotees of the palmy
of Rome have looked into the seeds of ti
and beheld their shafted oriels thus clun
filled up, their chapel desecrated, their se
dungeons laid bare, and the flanking v
ploughed over—nay, even the vaulted pass
and apartments through which the solemn s
of their hallelujahs and hymns so swe

sounded, now made the dusty receptacle of the labouring implements of husbandry, the Saxon pillars and groined arches, half hidden with pea haums, and the grated windows stuffed up with sheaves of straw, perchance they might have begun to consider the efficacy of a cloistered life, shut out from all the pleasures of the world, when dust and "damned oblivion" thus hides their very tombs from the eye of man.

As the Lord of Folkstone entered the chapel, the monks were prostrated upon the cold flags, engaged in prayer; they had just received a severe homily from the superior.

For one moment the young esquire stooped his plumed head, crossed himself, and bent his knee to the crucifix at the extremity of the chapel. He then strode up to the superior, who was standing before the altar, and uncere- moniously interrupted the mass.

Father Eustatius, the superior of Salmstone, was no common personage. He was a true monk, and suited to the times in which he lived. Proud, vindictive, crafty, and jesuitical, he

stopped at nothing for the advancement of a religion he secretly laughed at, and no deed, however horrible, would have made him hesitate, had its perpetration stood between himself and the preferment he sought.

The Lord of Folkstone had some slight knowledge of his disposition and character, and therefore trembled for the fate of her he came to seek ; and as the monk turned in surprise, on hearing the clatter of an armed man in his chapel at that hour, he remarked the angry spot upon the youth's brow.

" Sir priest," said the young esquire, placing his gauntlet upon the monk's shoulder, " I come hither to demand restitution of one I gave to sanctuary in your chapel."

" Of whom is it your pleasure to speak, my Lord ?" said the priest, affecting surprise. " I know of no such person."

" I demand restitution of a youthful damsel, whom I myself brought hither, and delivered to your harbinger two days back ; and woe to you, monk, if by your villanous devices you have

harm'd her but in the estimation of a hair."

"From whom, my Lord," said the churchman, drawing himself up, "have you commission thus to take from the protection of the church, those who have sought its shelter?"

"Heed not thou that," said the youth, growing more angry, as he saw the disposition of the monk to prevaricate; "I come myself my own deputy, and here demand an account of one whose guardian I have constituted myself. Rumours of foul butcher-work here in your cells of iniquity, have reached me; and by yon heaven you do not serve, I swear, that unless dead or alive you account to me for the maiden I seek, I will search for her amongst the ruins of your infernal grange. Nay, attempt not to patter with me, priest, I know ye of old; neither shall it avail ye aught to bring your gate-house guard hither to oppose me. I will smite ye dead here upon your altar-stone, ere man can aid ye, unless you divulge to me the fate of her you wot of."

So saying, the bold noble grasped the monk

by the collar of his loose frock with a firm hand, as who should say, "you escape not from me, priest, without a full confession."

"How now, my Lord!" said the surprised ecclesiastic; "is this to be tolerated in the house of God, and are the ministers of heaven to be assaulted by violent hands at the very altar? Unhand me, Lord Folkstone; thou shalt rue this hour, wert thou backed—which I almost suspect—by John of England himself. Father Ambrose, call hither the convent guard; we are assailed by murderous hands, even in our very chapel here."

Upon this, the staring monks, who perhaps would not altogether have regretted seeing their stern superior get suffering penance and complete absolution on the spot, rushed from the chapel, whilst the enraged superior, thundering out the anathemas of the church against his persecutor, seized upon one of the candles from the altar, wherewith to perform the ceremony.

"Cease your mummary," said the young esquire, "and at once answer my queries. For your convent bow-men," he continued, unsheath-

ing his ponderous sword, as they entered the chapel, "they know better than to assail me. If they do so, I will unseam them from crown to waist-belt."

The young Lord of Folkstone was a dangerous spirit when once aroused. His blood was fairly up, and his handsome features, usually so placid and gentle-looking in repose, were now black and swollen with ire, a sure sign that blood would be likely to flow ere his anger was appeased.

The monk, whose iron heart knew no touch of fear, endeavoured to shake himself clear of his gripe, at the same time calling to the men-at-arms to seize upon the youth, or send a shaft through his brain, and a couple of stout fellows instantly rushed to the attack.

A Norman noble, however, clad in complete mail, was at that period no safe person to assail. Their blows fell upon his armour of proof with about as much effect as if they had been rained upon the hide of a rhinoceros; whilst he himself, forgetting the priest for a moment, dashed upon them, and cutting right and left with his

ponderous weapon, brought them down upon the pavement in an instant.

The monk was now convinced he could no longer prevaricate.

"Hold, Sir knight!" he said, as he looked upon his men-at-arms, "the days of Thomas à Becket have returned, I see. This deed of thine will demand a heavy retribution. Follow me to the vaults beneath the chapel, and I will conduct you myself in your search."

While saying this, the superior took one of the lamps in his hand, and bidding Father Ambrose and the trembling porter follow, he led the way through the chapel, and entering a long narrow passage, descended to the apartments beneath the building.

The young Lord now found himself in a large vault arched in the Gothic style, and supported by massive pillars, down whose sides the damp moisture ran in cold and heavy drops, the moonbeams but just appearing through the small openings, which were grated at its extremity.

"I warn you," said the monk; "you are

about to hold communion with one who hath dealings with the evil one. Enter the cell, and you will find her."

Had the young esquire done so, it is probable he would have seen the last glimpse of the moon on this side of the grave in the vault he was invited to enter, but he paused upon the threshold, as the monk threw open a massive door which, by a descent of some half dozen steps, led into a gloomy dungeon.

"Enter first, yourself, Sir priest," he said; "I am not to be trapped like a beaver in a hole. Proceed yourself into this pleasant refuge from the world's troubles. I follow close upon your heels."

The monk paused, and as the perspiration stood upon his brow, he seemed to shrink from the task.

"Take the porter with you, and go down," he said. "I cannot enter."

"Not so," returned the young esquire; "porters are plentiful as the monks they serve, and they are becoming so numerous, that they drive the very fairies from their moonlight revels."

living tenant was to be so
smell of a charnel-house pe
as the blue and faint lig
lightning of a summer's eve
of the vaults above throug
rested upon the shrivelled
fibres of a skeleton form stre
at the extremity of the dun
seized the lamp, and directe
object before him. It was
mains of a monk who had
this cell and starved to dea
pitcher stood by its side, a
firmly fixed upon the witheri
arm.

The youth, after gazing f

of this noisome tomb. The maiden I seek can never have shared so fearful a prison-house."

The monk, who had turned his gaze from the corner of the dungeon where the body lay, in affected or real surprise, looked around as if he expected to find that another had tenanted it.

"I swear to thee, Sir knight," he said, "I myself caused the female you seek to be consigned to this dungeon, after she had been fully convicted of sorcery in the convent and condemned by a secret conclave, which assembled in the vault adjoining, at midnight. We cannot, however, hold dominion over those whom the devil aids; she hath doubtless passed from our custody in company with the enemy of mankind."

"Liar!" said the youth; "to serve thine own sinful and evil purposes, thou hast put this poor creature to silence. This juggling porter, here, but now divulged your secret. The grave, villain!" he said, turning upon the serving-man; "get spade and mattock, and show me the

“Holy Father,” said the
Ambrose, “I know not really
all this. This cunning
handicraft must have been
could she have removed her
dungeon? This noble, too
seduced by her. I am not a
much belief; but this passes
off.”

So saying, he followed into
vaults situate beneath the south
young Lord was already bent
to raise a newly-buried coffin
to convince himself that it either dis-
tained the body of the female or
search. When, however, the
and its

buried with dreadful haste the night before.

It was in vain, indeed, that the young Esquire ransacked the entire grange, from vault to ceiling, and endeavoured by threats and promised bribes to elicit from the brotherhood and the retainers of the establishment some clue towards the fate of her he sought. Those whom the church claimed, either for good or evil, in the dark days of monkish intolerance and superstition, were seldom redeemed from her close grasp ; and like the secret dungeons of the Inquisition, the stone walls, and deep vaults of the monasteries,* have oftimes revealed to after-times the unsuspected fate of many mourned for in their fathers' halls.

"You shall answer this insult to holy Mother Church, to the Abbot of St. Augustine," said the superior, as the youth prepared to mount his

* In Salmstone Grange, not long since, a niche was discovered in the thickness of the wall, containing the bones of some erring monk or nun who had been bricked up alive.

even to the hearts of Kings.'

" And look you well to y
returned the youth, vaulting
shaking his gauntleted fist
monks who stood in the {
this night's story to John
but that French wars tal
the instant, I would retu
den of iniquity ere mornin
I, myself, were condemne
for the act. King John
corrupted lives of the clerg
land, and hath thrown do
to the pardon-monger of
halidom, I expect on our re
black gownsmen like rooks, in
own behalfs "

tower, at the same time closing the gate, "drive a cloth-yard shaft through his hauberk to his heart."

The youth laughed in scorn, as he turned his steed, and drove the spurs into his flanks—and as a couple of arrows rapped his armour, he dashed round the building, and vanished.

CHAPTER

THE MUSTER OF THE 1

My ears have not yet drunk a
Of that tongue's utterance, ye

Fearful musters and prej

It wanted, at least, two h
Lord of Folkstone approach
Daundelyonne. The pale n
light over the surrounding s
renzo describes, when he says

"This night is but the da
whilst the grassy carpet of the
diately around the castle was

and Oberon, and all their elfin court. The flag flapped heavily upon the keep of the castle, and to the bustle of preparation had succeeded the deep silence of repose.

"The cricket sang, and man's o'erlabour'd sense
Repaired itself to rest."

The superstitions of the old age were at this period in full force. Men believed in witches and warlocks, fairies, and sheeted ghosts, as firmly as if such fantasies had been a portion of their religion. Such superstitions had their evils. The belief in witchcraft alone sent thousands of innocent females to the faggot; but the more innocent superstitions of the day had their charms. They hallowed the very turf, and gave each bosky bourn, shadowy grove, and unfrequented wood, an interest which the artificial conventionalities of duller and more matter-of-fact times fail to identify with all that remains of the sylvan retreats of our once park-like island.

The once popular belief in the existence of fairies, has long departed from the minds of the peasantry of England, and it would doubt-

used to be skimmed, and the
who were oftentimes tormented
hold sprite, are now safe
The shining piece of money
found at early dawn, which had
by the good-will of the pigmy
shelter on the warm hearthstone

Times are indeed changed
the elfins sip from the cowslip
moss-trees of the wood, or dance
to the whistling wind upon
wold. Nay, the elfin rings worn
in childhood, are now subject
theses of science, and the fairy
mortal Shakspeare hath departed
island, and left us for ever.

kitchen, or dairy ; no city, castle, or tower, no stable, or barn, but had its familiar elf, pixie, or hobgoblin.

“ More swift than lightning did they fly
About their airy welkin soon,
And in a minute’s space descry
What things were done beneath the moon.
By wells and rills, in meadows green,
They nightly danced their hey-dey guise,
And with their fairy king and queen
Chaunted their moonlight minstrelsies.
When larks ’gin sing,
Away they fling,
And babes new-born steal as they go ;
An elf instead
They leave in bed,
“ And wind out laughing, ho, ho, ho !”

As the youth reined in his steed beneath the tall trees which at that period, grew in a sort of clump, about a couple of bow-shots to the eastward of the castle, and gazed around, he felt the soft influence of the hour steal over him.

The night-breeze gently recommending itself to his senses, cooled his somewhat fevered blood ; and giving way to the melancholy which pervaded him, consequent upon his recent disap-

himself he alighted from his steed, and threw himself down under the shadow of the overhanging branches. Perhaps it may seem strange to some of our readers, that the young Lord of Salisbury should thus experience a violent passion for the woman he had only seen for a few short moments, and that too under circumstances so peculiar. Certain it is, that even to himself, the melancholy he experienced on the occasion appeared somewhat extraordinary. There was, however, in this youth a conspicuous dash of the generous, disinterested chivalry of the old heroic times, entirely different from the sordid, calculating, and selfish character of our own mercenary age and system.

It must be taken into consideration also, that at this early period of John's reign, the minds of men were yet imbued with all those chivalrous feelings and ideas, it had been the peculiar delight of Richard Cœur de Lion to inculcate. The few writers of his day, and who were the delight of Europe, loved to represent in their romances a picture of chivalry, in which knights turned their spears upon preternatural

beings, or tremendous monsters, and these imaginary heroes of a past age, and perfect system of chivalry were believed to have really lived and had their being in olden times. Fiction then was confounded with truth, and at length it came to be thought that in the wilds and woods, and trackless forests of Europe were to be found the wandering redresser of wrong, the real errant, whose life was sworn to the cause of the oppressed. Some such feelings, indeed, were sought to be introduced by the old warriors of the time, towards the youth reared and educated in their households.

Amongst the iron-clad warriors who were so constantly engaged in public and private warfare, valour was the virtue which most commanded esteem and applause. Women also were taught to value the knight according to his skill and prowess in the listed or battle-field. The virtue of veracity, too, they professed to hold in like estimation: to lie was looked upon as a part of fear—the fear of speaking truth. Loyalty also was another point of honour, and

it grew the stronger in those times, from the habits of obedience in military service.

In the turbulent times which had succeeded Richard's reign, and during the insecure state of society, consequent upon the unscrupulous conduct of many of the more unprincipled of the Norman nobles, whose numerous fortresses were so plentifully scattered over the different counties of England, a few of the more generous and knightly of the land were led by inclination to taste the delight of employing valour for the protection of the feeble, against the spoiler. With them, young and beautiful damsels were admired for their attractions, and pitied and defended for their weakness.

As the young Lord of Folkstone looked around him upon the bladed grass, decked with liquid pearl, and silvered with the morn's rays, the fairy superstition of the age crept over him.

"Can it be possible," he said, "that the glamour of an evil spirit is upon me, and that I am under the spell of some pixie? The beauty of the girl has taken a strange hold upon my

fancy, and her probable fate has cast a gloom upon my spirits which it will take some time to dispel. I will combat the feeling," he continued, rising and mounting his steed. "In the solitude of my own chamber, I will examine into my own heart." So saying, the youth took his way to the Gate House, and sounding his bugle was admitted to the court-yard, where resigning his steed to one of the night-guard, he ascended the winding stairs of the flanking tower, which was his quarter.

Nothing, so powerfully calls home the mind as distress, real or imaginary. The soul retires within itself, sits pensive, and is susceptible of right impressions. If we have a friend, it is then we think of him—if a benefactor, at that moment all his kindnesses press upon our mind. Merciful Heaven! is it not for this that they who in their prosperity forget thee, do yet remember and return to thee in their hour of sorrow? When the heart is in heaviness, upon whom can we think but thee, who knowest every sigh and melancholy groan we utter!

The young Esquire knelt down before the

which was pressed against the stor-
vies of his former wanderer, and told his
hearts.

Yes, we have seen that he held no opinion
of the iron rights of monastic intolerance, and
that in a good cause, he would even brave the
monsters of the Vatican: but he was yet a
religious and virtuous youth, for the times in
which he lived, and having received comfort
from his devotions, he rose, and throwing
open the grated window, gazed upon the blue
and moonlit deep in the distance.

As he did so, he heard the strings of an
instrument which gave forth a short prelude,
and then a voice soft and sweet as Apollo's lute,
strung with his hair, warbled a verse or two of
an old ditty. The song seemed to speak words
of hope to his disappointed feelings; its tones
also appeared to bear some invisible and incom-
prehensible identity with her he sought.

Is hope a God
That never dies;
His blest abode
In trusting eyes,
Whose beauty time defies?

Yes, fondly still,
Brighter than ever,
Midst every ill,
Nothing can sever
The light that leaves us never.

The youth was surprised. The ditty sung by that voice seemed to bid him hope of discovering her he sought ; such a voice had never before been heard within those walls. It must be some fairy, he thought.

“ What, ho, there !” he said, leaning from the narrow window of the tower. “ Who sings below at this hour ?”

“ A poor page,” returned the voice.

“ In whose service ?” said the Esquire.

“ In the service of the Lady Bertha,” returned the other. “ We awake her in order to prepare for departure at dawn ;” so saying, the player again struck his instrument.

All thou hast loved,
Lies in the grave,
Still may you prove,
How hope can save,
Tho’ Heaven take all it gave.

As the first faint streaks of dawn began to lace the severing clouds in the east, the warder's horn sounded from one of the four square towers of the Gate House, and a wild flourish of martial music striking up in the court-yard, announced that the hour of preparation for departure had arrived. Accordingly, the hurry and bustle of the aroused inhabitants of the castle were quickly heard, and the exciting scene of a military party, preparing for the march, might have been viewed, together with all the circumstances of the gathering of a knightly train in those stirring times. Pages and horse-boys hurried hither and thither on their several quests and messages. Men-at-arms, demi-lances, custrels and grooms were to be seen in their buff jerkins, fitting on their arms and armour, leading out steeds, examining steel saddles, and other accoutrements and appointments, amidst the noise of direction, the going out, and the coming in of message and inquiry, incident to all the bustle of a military party, upon the move for foreign service. In the midst of which, immediately around the keep and offices of the main

building, might be observed serving-men, with the demi-lion upon their coats, hurrying along upon the no less important business of preparing for the morning meal. This was served in the great hall of the keep, where banner and pennon, and helmet, and blazoned shield, battered and torn, and speaking of other days, and similar gatherings from Palestine, hung aloft. Then loudly rang the trumpet call, and mustered the whole train in array for the march.

CHAPTER

LONDON IN THE REIG

To the spital go,
And from the powdering tut
Fetch forth the lazar kite of

Think, when we talk of horses,
Printing their proud hoofs i' th

Attest in little space, a mil

THE Knight of Daundely
the great hall, whilst the La
Hugo and Walter Mauluc, su

He then beckoned to Walter Mauluc, who having placed himself beside the Lady Bertha, as his dark eye glanced over her matchless form, was pouring his high-flown compliments into her not unwilling ear.

"Our roads," said the knight, addressing the esquire of Poiteau, "separate some half a mile hence: you will bear this sealed brief to the King, whose power you will be likely to fall in with between Sittingbourne and Canterbury. Commend me to him with all true duty:—meanwhile your packet informs him, that all things requisite have been arranged for a speedy embarkation. The Cinque Ports are on the alert, and all preparations for wafting his power across the sea goes on apace. Lord Folkstone," he continued, taking his esquire apart, "you will accompany Mauluc, and join the King's party. This packet is for Hubert de Burgh; it treats of matter of importance, and requires some tact in judging of its best time of delivery into his hands. Enough: we meet next on French ground: farewell."

The knight, as Lord Folkstone and Mauluc

castle.

The cavalcade then filing from the principal entrance, of morning were just exhalation files of the cavalcade emerged from four square-built towers, from men of the castle, who were pale and left behind, looked down. The guard too, drawn up just and lowered their partisans, and then out a martial flourish, whilst and servitors, who formed the core of the reserved garrison, as they left the gateway, crowded after uttering their rude jests and bade them farewell.

“Adieu, comrade,” said the

bout too, but we must stay here, whilst the brave game is playing, I trow."

"Grieve not thou, Diccon," returned the rider, "I lay my lance to thy bow-string, there'll be work enough anon for all hands, even here at home soon. There's a storm brewing, as the sailor says ; I hear it sing i' the wind already."

"Adieu, Lawrence," shouted another ; "commend me to dark-eyed Jacqueline of Calais, if she still lives."

"A most important commission," said the jester, at that moment riding up ; "here I pray thee, good Lawrence, take up this stirrup for me, good youth. Yonder knave of a groom is full of his ropery, and hath altered every particle of my horse-furniture in the hope I shall break my neck. Revenge is a debt, in the paying of which the greatest knave is honest and sincere, and so far as he's able, punctual. The villain remembers I had him punished for the last trick he played me."

"There's no pleasing a fool," said the groom sauntering up "I've had more trouble

that nobody can please. Go
art but a sour crab at best."

"Adieu, Gondibert," said
cannot afford to lose thee.
cockscorn, and bring it back
Keep thy bauble too unscathed
knight might have left thee
our dull hours here in Kent,
wars."

"I must serve as a sort of
jester, "to keep up the courage
adversity. The affair could
I proceeded also. God prosper
and keep you all in this blessed
home, say I."

"Is that thy son, there, Gondibert?
Maud, the warder's wife. as

"Whose son is that you have put into old Hubert's hands this moment," replied the jester, "can'st tell me? For 'tis more than he can."

We must now retrograde somewhat in our history, that we may look upon London at this period, and glance upon the royal army which the King had collected together with a celerity perfectly astonishing, and putting himself at its head, by rapid marches was now conducting through the pleasant county of Kent towards the coast, in order to embark and strike a blow in France, almost ere the news of his intent should have reached the court of Philip.

On the early dawn of the morning of the departure of the King and his power, the curious old streets of Lud's Town presented the appearance of one vast garrison. Knights of high birth and military renown, who had bled in the Crusades, quitted their castles on the royal summons, bringing with them their men-at-arms of all descriptions, their

field, had either arrived, or coming in with all their t bowmen from the villages, ha of Yorkshire, Warwickshire, and other parts of England, cl doublets and hoods, had com ranks of the infantry—those f England, who were trained at the butts erected in eve ancestors of that peasant ir afterwards renowned in every and Agincourt, and a hundr up to Flodden.

All day long the army of Jc times there was by no means larity in the march as in ou

party after party ; some even arriving from distant parts at one gate, and after a short halt marching out again at another. For many hours the bridge over which they passed to the Kentish side, a thoroughfare of dark, castellated houses and towers, was almost choked up with the iron forms of the stately horsemen, and the masses of infantry, which, moving under the numerous dark portals, seemed an endless train.

The streets of the city presented a curious contrast to what is now to be observed. War, at this period, was the business of life, and little show of other business was then to be observed in its crowded streets. The low-roofed houses of the citizens, and the narrow streets, here and there relieved by some dark monastic edifice, or strong built castellated mansion, spoke of little else but what pertained to deeds of broil and battle. The armoury of the inhabitants, when not on the back of the owner, was to be found hanging ready to the hand in each citizen's home ; whilst the low-roofed and dark apartments were secured from invasion by the

and poverty, and which were
of the principal streets, their
infected by pestilence, murder
rife even in open daylight, a cur
have been viewed, as there the
the cankers of the army, we
follow, like slot-hounds, upon th

There might be seen a goodly
swell mob of early days; youth
the juvenile depraved, clad in
and tattered garb, bringing out
preparing for the march; the
bully, whose hands were red
but who feared the sun; the
beard was like that of Hercules,
was white, left his skulking hol

and blind alleys, all the bustle and excitement which had before been observable in the more important streets and thoroughfares. The army had marched, and like birds of ill-omen, as the shadows descended, the followers of the ~~lamp~~ were pressing to follow on its track. They wound out of the styes and hovels—that degraded crowd—and bundling up their things, and strapping on their wallets, drunk with excitement and strong drink, they hurried out of the city in groups ere the gates were closed.

As the night settled down upon the city, might still have been heard the loud laugh, the shriek, and the deep-mouthed curse amidst the low vaults and cellars which, at that period, ran under the inferior streets like a honeycomb; hiding from the eye of daylight the refuse of the population; and holding in their cavernous womb the outlaw, the starving mendicant, and all whom the fangs of the law would have fastened upon. All night long, the brawl, the insane shout, and the drunken riot, consequent upon the excitement of the time, were heard

at intervals in this sink of misery and sin.

In a low vault, whose grated entrance was in a by-street, and under the dark walls of a monastic building, whose subterranean depths had been long unused, even as a place of sepulture, were assembled a motley company of outcasts, outlaws, thieves, and beggars, composing the scum of the crowded town. There might have been seen the gaunt and sun-burnt form of the common soldier, who had gone the Crusade in the former reign; and who in the Crusader's camp, upon the arid plains of Palestine, had been taught the vices which brought him low, disqualified him for the forest-home he had left, and made him what he was, a gambling, drunken villain, the associate of the ruffian and the cut-purse of the highway. There also were to be seen the swarthy Egyptian wanderer, the common robber, the lurker behind the buttress, whose trade was to smite the passenger from behind and in the dark; and every class and grade of villain whom the peculiar spirit of the time found in his calling.

Herding in the very vicinity of mouldering coffins, and in the centre of damp decay, hiding almost unsuspected beneath the cloisters of religious edifices, the forfeited life was partially spent amidst dicing, drinking, brawl, and sin. Grovelling deeper each hour, they sought the hell for which they seemed to have been created.

“If man can’t mount

He will descend ; he starves on the posses’t.”

“The pestilence catch thee,” said a swarthy-looking female, clad in the cast doublet of a man, which she wore over her filthy weeds, like some modern Jezebel of the camp in the present day. “The fiend curse thee !” she said to a sottish, melancholy-looking man, who sprawled his length upon a broken bench opposite her ; “thy craven heart then fails thee—thou wilt not follow the war this bout ?”

“I will not,” returned the ruffian, “or, at all events, I follow no lay which thou art upon. I’ve seen enough, and had enough of thee ; seek another companion. When I walk next, it will be in other company.”

“May the fiend curse me, then, if I drive not

more at her grace. "And I
with me will hast so long to
miserable fortunes, I'll have
tioner's thong with three w
though I myself hang with
tree. You forget yourself!
good knight's goblet at the fea
Who shed desolation over the
the infant heiress of the noble

"Enough—enough!" said
me not. 'Tis of that I thin
will no longer herd with a fool
weary with my journey, and w

"What means the brute?"
"and what temper is this th
with thee from Kent?"

"I mean that thou hast i

you and I stole, and whom we have so narrowly watched for our own advantage, hath escaped our clutches, together with the proofs which would have made us rich for ever."

"What mean ye?" said the female, "is she dead?"

"She is, for aught I can learn," returned the other. "The woman of Brabant, with whom she lived, hath suffered death, and her dwelling is burned to the ground. You would always persuade me to entrust that child to her entire care in our late wanderings; and now, during our absence after that business in Warwickshire, Mabel hath been at her old employment of fortune-telling. She has been burnt for a witch, I find, and the child is either dead or beyond our reach. Some Lord rescued her from the faggot, and she was delivered to the custody of a convent, within whose walls she has doubtless come to a bad end."

"All our scheme, then, is so far blown to air," said the female; "but I think not so badly. At all events, had I taken charge of the child, and brought it up under our own care, I know then

what would have come on't. So far we are but where we should have been. No, no ! we could have reaped but small benefit any how, had the girl been brought up entirely a vagabond. Under Mabel's care, she learned no harm, although she travelled so long with our camp."

"Well," said the other, "it's all up now ; we've had the spending of the spoil we grabbed with her, and there's an end. I am tired, and would sleep ; put aside the lamp, and keep silence for an hour, if you can. Perhaps I will take your counsel, and follow the footsteps of the expedition."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MARCH OF THE ENGLISH POWER.

His marches are expedient to this town,
His forces strong, his soldiers confident.
With him along is come the Mother-Queen,
An Até, stirring him to blood and strife ;
With her, her niece, the Lady Blanche of Spain ;
With them a bastard of the King deceased ;
And all the unsettled humours of the land,
Rash, inconsiderate, fiery voluntaries,
With ladies' faces and fierce dragons' spleens.
In brief, a braver choice of dauntless spirits
Did never float upon the swelling tide,
To do offence and scathe in Christendom.

SHAKSPERE.

THE young Lord of Folkstone and his companion, whom we have seen despatched on an especial mission towards the advancing army of the King, kept onwards at a brisk pace for some miles. They passed the bare and open part of the country immediately on this side Sarr, pricked across the marshes, and entered the

thickly-wooded lands at that period between Sturry and Canterbury. They then drew bridle, and breathed their steeds by a quieter pace ere they neared the city. Both were mounted upon the large, strong-jointed horse in use at that period ; an animal whose breed has been entirely extinct for centuries, and is more unknown to the present generation of equestrians even than the mammoth of a former world. Of strength capable, with ease, of bearing the weight of the iron shell which formed its owner's defence, and the linked mail and arms of the ponderous rider ; the war steed of the Norman knight also possessed considerable speed and endurance for the road.

Passing through the town, they halted and baited their steeds at a pleasant hostelry which, at that time, stood upon the summit of a hill some three miles beyond the city beside the high road. In the immediate vicinity of this hostel, amongst the glades of the woodland in which it was situate, were to be seen a large concourse of the Kentish bowmen, who having

been summoned from the different hamlets around, bivouacked beneath the shadow of the stunted oaks which grew on either side the road, whilst they awaited the coming of the army in whose van it was their privilege to fight.

This was in itself a most stirring and beautiful sight, the detachment of archers being, at least, fifteen hundred strong ; and as they reclined, or lounged about in groups at their trysting place, some refreshing themselves from their wallets, others mending or altering their weapons, and many practising with their bows at marks set upon the trees, the entire forest scene around seemed filled with these picturesque foresters.

The Kentish archers at this period were a splendid power. They were jealous of their reputation too, and—aware that no country in the world could produce such marksmen—their whole lives were passed in practising their craft. They carried shafts of a cloth yard in length, and few men of other countries could bend their bows. No armour was entirely proof against an

arrow well drawn by one of these bowmen, whose skill was so great that he could 'rap every rivet in a foeman's harness.' They were of larger limb than the men of most of the other counties in England, at that period, and celebrated for their fair and sunny locks, the bright red and white of their cheeks, and their high features. As specimens, indeed, of the peasantry, they were the most remarkably handsome race, perhaps, of any age. Many of the present detachment were clad in green frocks and hoods, but some wore a sort of leathern shirt, which, entirely without shape to the figure, was girded at the waist by a broad leathern belt.

The entire force seemed as if it had been picked from the *élite* of the different villages around. Not a man of middle height was to be seen, whilst every now and then a fellow of tremendous proportions was observable.

Kent was at this time proud of her bowmen, and, at the monarch's request, sent her best men into the field. Besides their bows, many of them carried short swords; whilst others, again, wore across their waist-belts, and at their backs,

a sort of brown bill, somewhat larger than what we may now see used by the hedger and ditcher, a ghastly weapon in the hands of these powerful men, and which, sharp as a razor, would cleave a skull, or shear through muscle and bone at a blow.

The surrounding scene, on either hand, was one of extreme beauty to the eye of the travellers; as, having baited their steeds, they led them forth, and prepared to mount. The thick woods, whose bright green tops were seen for miles and miles on the London side, looked in the clear morning sun a succession of fairy hillocks of the softest and most delicate verdure; and as the eye traversed the expanse, it seemed that all England was one mighty forest, unaltered by the axe of the woodman for countless ages, and amongst whose impenetrable verdure occasionally peeped forth the stone-built turrets of some frowning castle, the spire of the village church, or the tower of the monastery. To the rear, also, the living verdure of the tall trees seemed to approach, and almost to embosom the huge buildings, towers,

its descent.

As the travellers neared the town, they became aware of John's power, for upon gaining the Quarry the advance-guard were seen to halt on the ascent. They therefore halted on Mount, and watering their steed which rises near Langley Park, the Medway, they watched the army as it emerged from the coppice beneath the hill.

First came the infantry, varied in arms, a dark, compact gait, unflinching in look. Behind them, in a sort of half armour, the cavalry, with their shoulders

hundreds of a more lightly armed body, wearing merely thick, quilted leathern doublets, armed with sharp spikes, sword, dagger, and target. After them came a sort of irregular cavalry of the commoner sort, completely armed ; but their appointments, in place of being bright and showy, were dark, greasy-looking and sombre.

This division marched somewhat in front of the main army, and then came the knights and nobles of the land :

“ All furnished all in arms,
All plumed like estridges, that wing the wind.”

with their retainers, vassals, and men-at-arms, a gorgeous train,

“ Rash, inconsiderate, fiery voluntaries,
As ever floated on the swelling tide,
To do offence and scathe in Christendom,”

This was, indeed, the pomp and circumstance of glorious war. The very sight of the mail-clad knights, with their train, and the gonfalon borne behind them, sent a thrill through the gazer's frame. Pennon and banderole, and plume and crest, filled the ranks with bright colours,

whilst the sun's rays were glanced back from shield and spear and bright harness, for ten and miles.

The very drums of the King's body-guard as they came on with their heavy, rolling beat keeping time to the blast of the brazen trumpet and shrill fife, were hung with crimson velvet and emblazoned with the royal arms. There rode the herald too, in his gorgeous tabard, with the pursuivants; and after him came the somewhat motley array of unscrupulous hirelings, lances of the free companies. For,

“ Now all the youth of England were on fire,
And silken dalliance in the wardrobe lay.”

The gentry of the different counties sent forth their sons to the war.

“ The wealthy, curled darlings of the land,
They sold the pasture then to buy the horse.”

There rode from the knightly county of Warwickshire alone, a host of gallant youth with names, now no longer on the muster-roll of living, are yet to be seen amongst those fine warrior-tombs in the ancient churches of

villages and hamlets of that park-like county. The Murdakes were there, glittering in arms ; the Clintons of Coleshill, the Comptons of Wynyate, the Ashleys of Hill Morton, the Cantelupes of Snitfield, the Sheldons of Beoley, the Ferrers of Chartley, the Wolveys of Bude, the De Lawards, the Walshes, the Meredens, the Comptons of Compton Wynyate, the Wellesberns of Hastang, together with the Carbonels, the Blenkenaps, the Walshes, the Atwoods, the Mountferts, the Lounghes, the Archers, the Darbercourts, the Verduns, the Berkswells, and a hundred knightly trains besides.

The northern counties, too, sent forth their knights, and the stalwart champions of the west were there. Kent, also, sent forth her quota. There rode the Mottes of Lydde Court, the Curbspines of Ashe, the Crevequers of Sarr, the Loungevilles of Knolton, the Peytons, the Halfnods, the Kingleys, the Daubervilles, the Criols, &c., &c. Then came the heavy ordnance, the bombardæ, as they were at that period termed, a name which was given to the rude cannon of the time, from the great noise they

vention had dictated. They were made of bars or pieces of iron lengthwise, and hooped with iron beyond all proportion; heavy in a great degree unmanageable, not to be fired above three or four times in action, or indeed discharged without bursting. Nay, so great a difference was between the charges and discharges of these unwieldy pieces, that in the interval they frequently had leisure to repair the shock of the enormous stores they carried. In addition to their size they bore the portentous names of the Aspick, the Dragon, the Lion, &c.

The King rode in the very midst of this knightly throng surrounded by

Bigot, Earl of Norfolk, Mareshall ; the Earl of Pembroke ; his Chamberlain, Hubert de Burgh, and many other of the highest nobles of the land. Those formed his immediate staff as he rode ; a sight alone such as all modern conceptions of the pomp and splendour of war must fail of picturing. All wore their coronets upon their helmets, together with their surcoats emblazoned with the several devices of their arms ; their fierce, grim countenances, displayed by the upraised visor, and bearded like the pard.

The King himself wore his crown surrounding his helm, and on his glittering surcoat was the lion of England. He appeared in high spirits, chatting familiarly to the nobles around him, and shewing by the tenor of his discourse the feelings uppermost in his mind ; namely, the strong and all-powerful resolution to avenge the insult he had just received from Philip of France, and strike terror into his foe like the lightning-flash.

Perhaps John was one of the most extraordinary anomalies that ever held the reins of power.

nical, selfish and depraved ; and he could affect a show of wisdom, and act the magnanimity when it was expected he was a the designs of the butcher and

Those who looked upon him amidst of his nobility, might have perceived all this at a glance. In figure he was no bad picture of a King ; there was something of the majesty of his countenance. 'Tis true, but it hedges a King was there ; but to those who closely might observe a villainous and amidst his most joyous merriment a drop of the eye-lid, and a downward demon tugged at his breast, and a cold shiver. His first sham glance

that scowl would herald the ever-during sneer of confirmed hate, or resolve into the smile of welcome and apparent liking. He loved to be feared, but he also loved to be feared by the bold alone. Those who feared aught beside himself he despised; and he could sweep from his path the man he conceived in the way, even of a few acres of land, with as little compunction as he would brush a spider from his coat.

As the Lord of Folkstone stood entranced with the splendour of the sight before him, that iron army passed on with a rushing sound, as if a continued shower of steel hail was rattling down; and then, as the baggage and its guard, and the camp-followers came in sight, the overcharged heart, which had filled with rapid pulsation consequent upon the exciting scene, relieved itself by a deep sigh.

They gazed as the last glittering files of the knightly train became lost beneath the massive foliage under which the road wound after crossing the heath at this part, and then, as the deep boom of the drum was lost amidst the woods,

they turned their steeds and rode slow
them.

“ We cannot approach the King
Mauluc, “ till he halt for the night, wh
be at Sittingbourne: unless on matter
import, it is not permitted to have spe
him on the march.”

CHAPTER VIII.

A CINQUE PORT IN THE OLDEN TIME.

The nature of our people,
Our cities, institutions, and the terms
For common justice.

SHAKSPERE.

The King doth wake to-night, and takes his rouse,
Keeps wassail, and the swaggering, up-spring reels.

IBID.

WE must now, in motion of no less celerity than that of thought, shift our scene to the Cinque Ports, which, performing during all occasions on which war raged upon our coasts, a most important part in the drama, at this moment presented a stirring scene. The Cinque Port towns during John's reign, and indeed during many subsequent reigns, were considered the safe-guard of the kingdom. Situate at those parts of the coast most assail-

able, some of them opposite the narrow seas adjoining the foe, they were, besides, the mark upon which the hatred of the French continually displayed itself, and, in return, the navy of the Cinque Ports, even at that early period, was a terrific scourge to the Frenchman's coast. The warlike inhabitants of these thick-walled towns were a sort of amphibious race, and their superiority as seamen, even at the period of our story, bore abundant witness to supremacy on the ocean.

The barons of the Cinque Ports, by their cities' charter, held rank amongst the nobility of the kingdom, and by virtue of the perilous services they continually performed, obtained advantages not enjoyed by the freemen of other towns. Their constant readiness for action, and the stout and warlike state of their vessels, rendered them worthy of being rewarded by especial privileges and honours, and, consequently, the Cinque Porters of former days were a peculiarly proud, martial, and somewhat primitive race.

In reality, the barons of the Cinque Ports

ranked above the knights. They were on an equal footing with the peers ; besides which, they had the privilege of walking in the coronations of our Kings and Queens, and carrying the canopy over their heads. To see a Cinque Port Baron of the middle ages walk down the streets of his own town, even on ordinary occasions, was quite a circumstance. In step and bearing, with his huge sword and shield at his back, and heavy chain mail, he was like the Spaniard of old, who quarrelled with the very notion of being obliged to tread upon the vulgar earth. But when the breath of war blew in their ears, the Cinque Porters were a sort of rude exaggeration of a man-of-war sailor of modern times ; all fire, rough determination, amphibious bearing, and rude valour. Cradled amidst the excitement of constant watch and ward, sack and siege, the inhabitants were uncouth and fierce in disposition, even for their own times.

The mayor of a Cinque Port town was also a tremendous functionary. His powers were extensive, and he carried death in his eye as he walked the thick-ribbed streets with his town-

guard, his serjeants-at-mace, his hog-beadles, his water-bailiffs, and the fell executioner in his train.

Not only had the Thanes, or Barons of the Cinque Ports, their peculiar privileges, but they also had their peculiar punishments, pains and penalties. They could not only hang, behead, draw and quarter criminals, but in the Cinque Port of Sandwich they had the more uncommon and barbarous usage of drowning offenders in a stream which ran at the Canterbury end of the town; a portion of ground likewise was marked out and set apart as a field of death, in which criminals were even frequently buried alive.

The greater part of John's power, on the night subsequent to the day we have beheld it on its march, lay in and around Sandwich, in whose haven had been brought up by the industrious inhabitants—with an alacrity which showed it was a labour they delighted in—the several crafts that were to embark the division of the army immediately commanded by the King.

Sandwich, on this occasion, bore little resem-

blance to the town we see at the present time. even ancient as it undoubtedly is. The streets that were in existence in John's reign are now entirely remodelled, their very names forgotten, and their directions unknown. The gate-houses, now ruinous and desolate as they appear, were then unbuilt, and in place of the red brick battlements of the one or two remaining, and which speak of an Elizabethan age, the gates, walls, dwellings and monastic buildings which then stood within the boundary of the old faced ramparts, were built of dark flints, massive with bastions, and ominous-looking as the times in which they existed.

At the period of our story, this dark, romantic-looking Cinque Port, with its battle-mented walls and venerable church, appeared one great garrison, choked up with troops, and choice-drawn cavaliers; whilst the surrounding villages of Ash, Wingham, Woodnesborough, and Eastry, presented a glorious appearance as, seated before the different hostels, and lounging beneath the tall trees which then

shadowed at intervals the streets of an English hamlet, laughed, chatted, and sang the jovial-hearted soldier of old, the stately knight, the youthful esquire, the wandering minstrel, and the merry-eyed lass who followed in the gallant train. Then rattled the dice-box, trolled the catch, and echoed

“The lightsome laugh at little jest.”

The period of our island history which we are now describing, we may safely affirm to be most peculiar in its annals. The thirteenth century, besides being famous for a reign commingled with chivalrous splendour, desperate deeds, and acts of horror and barbarity seldom surpassed, may be considered, also, as the period of a great intellectual advance throughout Europe.

The Benedictine monks, the first reformers of the Catholic clergy, had become rich, lazy, and voluptuous to a degree, giving great scandal to the community; whilst the Dominicans and Franciscans rising in their stead, renounced all separate and corporate property, and threw

themselves upon the charity of the benevolent for support.

These mendicant orders became more popular from a severe literal adherence to some texts of the Gospel, and their embracement of absolute poverty gained them the general ascendancy naturally yielded to a life of self-sacrifice.

The vernacular languages began to be cultivated, and a native literature to show its early blossoms—some poetical flowers beginning to bloom even in remote, distracted, and barbarous Scotland.

Religious chivalry, which had broken out in the Crusades, probably guarded Christendom from the fanatical ambition inculcated by the Mussulman religion. Festive chivalry, consisting of jousts, tilts, and tournaments—a mimic warfare fitted to amuse a military age—reminded men of their prowess, kept them in the constant exercise of arms, displayed the skill and magnificence of the knightly and the noble of the land, and even humanized their manners. The disputes between popes and temporal sovereigns during this reign, verged to-

wards extinction, when Innocent III., favoured by circumstances, had pushed the papal pretensions to their utmost, amongst the best consequences of which was, that men were taught the possibility of maintaining the civil rights of various classes without an unnecessary appeal to arms, and with some mixture of an appeal to law and reason. The principles to which popes and kings paid deference in their fierce debates were applied to the political privileges of the laity, and contributed to the successful issue of that renowned struggle known in history by the name of the Barons' Wars.

To these principles it is owing that John's reign, although he was, perhaps, the most contemptible of princes, is the most memorable portion of our earlier history. Ignorance began amidst the full scene of horrors to peep through the blanket of the night.

The Cinque Port town of Sandwich, we have already said, presented a singular appearance even for the period in which we are writing. The King himself was quartered in the castle,

a square massive building, with a flanking tower at each corner, and situate just without that part of the walls of the town which look towards Walmer. Except his own immediate attendants, and his chamberlain, Hubert de Burgh, it was the royal pleasure to be unattended by the numerous nobles accompanying the host. Here he gave audience, immediately on his arrival, to the Cinque Port barons, heard their report of matters connected with the embarkation of his power, the list of ships in immediate readiness for the division under his own eye, and received report of other matters appertaining.

All night long, the men-at-arms were crowded into the unwieldy-looking, embattled, floating castles, which constituted the ships of war of the period, and the huge bottoms were towed out, as vessel after vessel received its warlike freightage, till with morning's dawn, they appeared :

“ A city on the inconstant billows dancing.”

Meanwhile, after a slight refreshment, as the King intended to sleep that night in the castle,

and embark his own followers and a large concourse of knights with early dawn, he gave the more immediate superintendence of matters to Hubert de Burgh. Then, throwing off his surcoat with the arms of England, and stripping himself of all the ensigns of royalty, taking Walter Mauluc with him, and merely equipped as a common knight, he left the castle as the shadows of evening descended, and approached the town of Sandwich.

It was by no means an uncommon custom for John to masquerade in different disguises after this fashion; but not—as in the case of the eastern monarch of the fairy tales—that he loved to see into the law's abuse, and the happiness of his people. John merely descended from his state that he might grovel in all the license of low society, and enjoy unrestrained the sight of common manners in the very gutters and kennels of his kingdom. He loved, too, to play the base and common spy upon his people; to bring up the popular topics of the time, to sound the base-string of his own name, and find the answering chord in the unsuspecting replies

of his subjects. Making a detour across the greensward upon which the castle stood, towards the left, he approached the gate which admitted to the town from the Canterbury road.

"I will see this rare specimen of female excellence, Sir Squire," he said, as they trod the greensward. "If she be indeed so exquisitely endowed, 'tis pity a Kentish boor should bear the palm. How call ye the man betrothed to her?"

"The Lord of Folkstone," returned Mauluc; "he whom I introduced to your Highness at Canterbury."

"Ha! say'st thou? A likely stripling, and well worth a lady's eye. Thy suit, Sir Walter, with that swarthy visage of thine, is like to prove a cold one. Thou wilt be like to experience a rebuff, methinks, even though I myself recommend thy virtues, should the maiden have looked with an eye of favour upon the bright form of that youthful noble."

"Marry, my Liege," said Mauluc, "I think

not so lightly of my own powers. I will give the lout Folkstone the start he has gotten, and yet beat him easily. The tongue, my Lord, the tongue—round but a flattering tale in a fair lady's ear, she's thine for ever. With your Highness's recommendation, my life upon't, I win and wear the beauty, ere we return from these wars. Give me but leave to deal in this matter as I think best, and the affair is settled."

"Thou art over-confident, Sir Knave," said the King, "our English maidens are made of somewhat more obdurate stuff than your jades of Poitou. Beware the lion's tooth! The Daundelyonnes are of the fiercest and most fell in Britain. One word of thy suit whispered in Sir Gilbert's ear, and he'll scourge the penniless Poitevin with horse-girths through the camp. Bethink ye, too; this Bertha, besides being enamoured of the swain Folkstone, is a very Lucifer for pride."

"Pride, my liege," said the esquire, "like an eagle, soars above the sky, but love can make the royal bird as tame as the lark that nestles

upon the ground. The lady loves not the Lord of Folkstone ; I have discovered that already. Her bosom is pierced by the blind god, but her love is more lowly than your highness would suspect."

"Nay, prythee," said John, "a truce to thy vanity ; it makes me sick. Dost mean to say that in two or three hours' conference thou hast made this miracle of beauty thy obedient slave—that she forgets her haughty bearing, and loves thee ?"

"Not so, my liege," replied the esquire, somewhat bitterly ; "that would have been but a small wonder to what is really the case. The lady loves one of meaner estate even than myself. She loves even her own domestic, a vagabond page of doubtful birth ; a varlet with nothing to recommend him but a cittern, a velvet pouch, a trim leg, and, I needs must say it, a most winning face and form as ever the eye of beauty glanced on."

"Ha ! say'st thou !" returned the King : "this must be looked to. But, enough ! at more leisure remind me of the affair ; at present I am

"I am not at all your levo-
warder," he answered; "at ad-
vance I am your own no matter
what you say, but I am here."

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vance I am your own no matter
what you say, but I am here."

The gates were already closed, and the
city was a mass of smoke and the oozy,
dark, wet mud which surrounded the town,
the old walls and the which he saw the still
the level extended the surrounding scene
like a desert. The gates were already closed,
around a large concourse of camp-followers,
wandering minstrels, and several men-at-arms
were congregated upon the green-sward on
either hand. They constituted a portion who
had been shut out from the town by the

authorities; the Cinque Port regulations being strict in permitting as few vagabonds or doubtful characters as possible within their walls after sun-down.

"There seems some commotion here," said the King, as he quietly sauntered towards the crowd assembled before the gate-house. "These locusts of the camp have been tasting the strong beer of the Barons and Burgesses of Sandwich. Slink quietly up, and note what passes; we may, possibly, meet with an adventure."

When the King and Mauluc had mingled amongst the throng, they found that considerable excitement was caused by a difference of opinion as to the right of one of the followers of the army, a sort of gipsy, to claim possession of a youth he asserted he had arrested in the town, and who, he affirmed, was a deserter from their tribe. The youth, who was clad in the habit of a page, was possessed of extraordinary beauty. He appeared in deep grief, and as he stood with his cittern at his back, he implored the one or two soldiers who stood around, to assist in delivering him from the

clutches of the man and woman who claime~~d~~ him.

According to his own story, he had been seized by the rude hands of the ruffian who a present held him, while on a message from a lady he served to the Lord of Folkstone, and dragged without the walls.

"Will any one do me a message to the Lady Bertha Daundelyonne?" said the page. "She lives not fifty yards within the gates. Ha!" he continued, extricating himself from the clutches of the ruffian, as the King and Mauluc their visors closed, came up to the spot. "Here are two noble knights who will hardly see a follower of the Daundelyonne injured. Protect me, gentlemen, from this man, and pass me through the gates, I implore."

"Stand back, hound!" said the King, as the ruffian sprung upon the page to reclaim him. "Stand back, I tell thee, lest I stain my sword with thy gutter blood. Take from our legs the clinging lad, but beware how you spring upon our person after this fashion."

The man stood back, awed he scarce knew

why; but he still retained his grasp upon the arm of the page.

"Your Highness," whispered Mauluc, "is forgetting your assumed character. This is something odd. 'Tis the youth of whom we were speaking, the Lady Bertha's page, whom this fellow claims. Best take him from the carter's custody; 'twill be a good introduction to the presence of the lady."

"Be it so," said the King. "Release the boy," he continued to the ruffian, "and give him to my charge."

"I will cut his throat first," said the camp-follower. "Hear me, Sir Knight, and I'll prove my right to claim him."

The King, however, was unused to be gain-sayed; he advanced to seize the page as the man, half mad with strong liquor and excitement, drew his dagger to strike, and the royal breast received the intended blow. The next moment, Mauluc had smote the ruffian to the earth with his iron gauntlet, and drawn his sword to finish him upon the ground.

"Stay!" exclaimed the King, whose chain-

mail had preserved him scathless, "I am unhurt. Seize the fellow alive; I would hear further from him concerning this lad. Deliver him for the night to the gate-house guard."

Upon this, the esquire stooped and fixed his iron gripe upon the ruffian's throat. The fellow struggled resolutely, but Mauluc dragged him from the ground, and beckoning to one or two of the men-at-arms standing around, delivered him into their custody, whilst the King, accompanied by the page, summoned the gate to admit them within the town.

The gate-house porter, however, proved a dogged churl: to the King's summons he gave a flat denial. Placing his mouth to a small round opening in the flanking tower, he desired the parties to remove themselves from the vicinity of the gate-house, lest the sentinel on duty above sent a shaft through their surcoats.

"We admit none within the town," said the porter, "after sun-down, without a Baron's pass. The King has given especial orders, too, that you scum be driven back to Coulesbridge. He'll

hang up all the ragamuffins he finds with the army to-morrow morning."

"Gramercy!" said John, aside, "I shall suffer from my own order."

"Ah," said the porter, "we've cleansed the streets of rubbish more than once since sunset; but look to it. The patrol will be out in a few minutes, and scour the road for a couple of miles. Best make yourself absent, then, while you can."

"Who commands at this gate?" asked the King, "I would speak with him. Say one of the King's household wishes to pass into the town."

"Nay, that will hardly pass current," said the porter, "since the King himself hath issued the order for no one to pass either into or out of the town without a Cinque Port order. Nicholas Espilon commands here; best not disturb him, lest he give thee a taste of the gate-house dungeon beneath this tower. It's an ugly hole, as I can tell myself, by the same token I once passed a terrible night there for being drunk at my post."

"Show him this token," said the King, taking a heavy ring from his finger, and handing it to the porter. "Tell him the owner stands without."

Scarcely had the ring passed within the dark gate-house, when the voice of command was heard, accompanied by the sounds of bolts and chains. The huge gates were immediately thrown open, and the ponderous iron portcullis raised, whilst a dark iron line of men-at-arms ranged themselves on either side beneath the arch.

"Signify we would be nought here," said the King to Mauluc; "deliver the prisoner into custody, and follow with the page."

The officer of the guard bent low as the King appeared beneath the arch; he then sank on one knee, and presented the signet ring he had received, and the monarch passed on.

Guided by the page, they approached a large and gloomy-looking mansion, standing close upon the shore of the haven, in that part of the town now called Strand Street. At the present period, a curious building may even yet be

seen, erected upon the site of the old dwelling of which we speak. The outward fabric, at the present day, proclaims it of the times of the Tudors, and it has twice had the honour of lodging Henry VIII., and has often been the residence of good Queen Bess. At the period of our story, it was a dark, turretted building, whose buttresses were washed by the waters of the haven, and was the residence of the mayor, who this night kept wassail, and entertained many of the nobles in the town. The King himself had signified his intention of being at the civic feast, but, afterwards, conceiving his present whim, had altered his intent, and excused himself.

The Earls of Salisbury, Pembroke, and Norfolk, however, together with many of the knights and nobles, and several ladies of rank were present, together with Sir Gilbert Daundelyonne, his son, and the Lady Bertha, their followers being quartered in the house. The town was so completely filled with knights and nobles, their retainers, vassals, and men-at-arms, that the King and Mauluc had passed along its

streets unnoticed, and now mingled among the serving-men, who were hurrying hither and thither in all the bustle of the mayor's feast and entering the long, stone-built hall in which it was held, they stood for some minutes to observe the party.

We wish it were in our power to describe in full the Mayor of Sandwich and his hospitable hall in the twelfth century. Terstane Copeldyke was Mayor on this year, a decent specimen of a sea-built chief magistrate. He was a tall, stout, square-shouldered, sailor-looking warrior, long-armed, large-jointed, and splay-footed ;—his iron-grey hair, and enormous moustache curling upon either cheek giving him the appearance of a huge, woolly-headed, twisted-horned ram, as he sat at the head of his board. In manner he was blunt, bold, and hearty, even for the period in which he lived. A sailor of the middle ages, the King of the Cinque Ports, knowing little else but what pertained to the small portion of England immediately around that part of the county of Kent, and conceiving the Cinque Port of Sandwich the most important spot, not

only of all England, but of all the world beside.

By no means awed by the company of nobles at present honouring his festive board, any one of whom rode, even on ordinary occasions, with five hundred men at his back; he carried himself in a free and easy manner towards all; and treating them as if they had been a party of his own barons and burgesses met to celebrate some maritime affairs of the port, his conversation chiefly ran upon those events which had happened in preceding reigns, in his favourite town.

The guests saw this, and drew him out occasionally upon his favourite topic.

"I know not that, Sir Earl," he said, in answer to Lord Salisbury; "but this I do maintain, that our Lugdenburghters* have no good reason to respect the French; on the contrary, we have ever given them sufficing reason to know that our hatred is deadly, and

* The ancient name of the Sandwich folks.

they in return have spoiled us whenever they could get opportunity. All Kent smoked for it with fire and sword, what time Swaine pounced upon us. Old Sandwich even then held her own, and beat off the Dane. Every three hundred and ten miles of land furnished forth one vessel for Etheldred. They rendezvoused here, and here we fought and overcame. Tush, man, we know what a night-shriek sounds like. A blackened hearth and a family butchered is no such rare sight to a Sandwich burgess.

"Gramercy," said Salisbury, "we go to revenge injuries upon your town, Sir Mayor; we shall fire many a city by way of reprisal ere we return, I trust."

"I trust so, too—those who do return," said the Mayor. "By the mass, I would I were myself going with you. I'd smite hard; I hate a Frenchman as I detest the enemy of mankind. Hallo there, fill a cup all round: I drink to the fairest blossom in Kent, the Lady Bertha of Daundelyonne. Wacs hael, fair lady, when I look on thy cheek of beauty, I am

minded of the fair maid I lost the night Stonor was burnt, and Sandwich sacked. The Frenchmen got the best of us that night. They took my all, burned my house, and slaughtered wife and children, ere I could get to the rescue. Ah!" he continued, setting his teeth, "we took the edge off our grief by the rough grindstone of revenge. For one wail in English, we caused ten in French. We crippled the whole fleet of France for that exploit."

"By the mass, a burly fellow," observed John to Mauluc, as they sat something apart at the very lower end of the board. "I'll grant these Cinque Porters the privileges they lay claim to. I see their value."

"More liquor here, you scald knaves," cried the mayor. "Drink, Sir knights; come, fill again. Fore Heaven, I love to look upon your inland faces, nobles. Methinks I should like, too, to shiver a lance with one or other ere you sail."

"Do you mark the Lady Bertha," whispered Mauluc. "Observe how the page glides behind her chair. What think ye, my liege, does she not come up to my description?"

"A radiant creature," returned the monk, "mine eye hath well examined her face and form. But hark, what's that specimen of importance talking of now?"

"To the King, nobles," said the Monk, rising three parts drunk and holding fast his huge oaken chair, "and success to his reign! What though I'm a Saxon born myself, I know not who knows it. Silence, ye fat-paur abbot," turning to a churchman beside him, "I'm not going to speak any treason. I'm a Saxon born, I say. The fiend's light upon the friar; keep your devilish counsel from my gown. To the King, I say, albe it is not half so good a fellow as his brother Richard. I never saw him till this day, nor I had audience of him on his arrival. I was taught by Saint Bede, but Richard was a rare specimen. I remember his landing here after he escaped from that beggarly Austrian Duke. He lay here—let me see—on the 20th day of May, 1194. Gods, what a man he looked! I can recollect the gripe he gave my hand while he was refreshing himself at this table, the longest

I have to live. "By my soul, but the present and the late king bear no sort of comparison. The curse light upon the friar: what ails thee," continued the irate Mayor, twitching away his garment. "Have I said which of the two I think worst of, fool?"

CHAPTER X.

A ROYAL SUITOR.

The king, my father, shall be made acquainted
Of this assault.

SHAKSPERE.

Mad world—mad kings—mad composition.

IBID.

King Henry—Give me any gage of thine, and I will wear it in my bonnet : then if ever thou darest acknowledge it, I will make it my quarrel.

Williams—Here's my glove ; give me another of thine.

IBID.

MEANWHILE, the King passing behind the principal table (for, besides the one long board which reached from end to end of the hall, there were various smaller tables at which guests were seated), placed himself beside

Artha Daundelyonne, and with all the freedom his high station gave him, began to address his conversation to her. At first, the lady bent a supercilious eye upon the helmed knight, and only slightly responded to his sallies, till something seemed to whisper to her that he must be of elevated rank, and she began to be interested in his somewhat assured conversation :—

“ I have heard of your surpassing beauty, lady,” he said ; “ but no description could come up to that which I now behold. That is true beauty which has not only a substance, but a spirit. Nevertheless, I am bounden to you for dispelling a portion of the scorn of your bright eye.”

The Lady Bertha was pleased with the flattery. “ Is it really your pleasure, Sir knight, to remain unknown ? ” she returned. “ I have already said, I care not to hold converse with one whose rank I know not. Lift your beaver that I may at least observe whether I have before seen a person who appears to know my name and lineage so well.”

to the honour of converse with
and charming as Bertha Dau
upon my knight's chain and so
he said, taking her hand, "the
votion of my lips upon this sword."

Royal favourites are often
their complaisance somewhat
relish. They live for their
and they die for his convenience.
Mauluc, who had really compassion
passion for the person of the
Daundelyonne, as well as for
to repent of his folly in
monarch so readily to her side.
King was really struck with her
the present moment he burned
at the same time he forced her.

He, therefore, endeavoured to direct the King's attention from Bertha, by calling his observation to the conversation of the Cinque Port Mayor, who was now becoming rather flustered with flowing cups, and the excitement of speechifying upon the subject of his favourite town.

"My paternal ancestor, my Lord," said the stalwart chief magistrate to the Earl of Salisbury, "was a bastard of Athelstan, governor of Kent. He fought the Danes both by sea and land, what time Eleacher had command here at Sandwich, taking nine ships, and destroying the rest of the fleet. That was in 852."

"It's an old saying," said the jester, Gondibert, "that truth lies in a well; but the misfortune is, that some men will use no chain to draw her up, but that which is so long that it is the labour of a life to finish it. I wish I could trace my descent to some great man's bastard who fought his battles long time since; I might then have been a mayor myself. As it is, I am but an ass at best."

"I tell ye," said the Mayor, smiting his fist

year, my Lord," he continued, "the Danes brought
and fifty vessels against the king's fleet. The
cestor did good suit and service, and Ethelwulf gave him a
hides of land for his day's work. I had stirring work here, I take
flood."

"I don't believe one word of the incorrigible jester; you
half, and get us all into the fire. Bolster up your own grandeur.
The blessed sun of truth shall pierce the mist, and his rays hit at
Richborough town. Pshaw!" continued the jester aside, to the
"I know this Cincinnot."

"Our town claims especial privileges," continued the Mayor, turning a deaf ear to the jester's last sally, "in virtue of the service we have always performed. The townsfolk beat off Unlaf, and even Swaine himself, with ninety-four ships, in 994. In 1006, our Cinque Porters destroyed the Danish fleet. Turkill Hemminge and Ailaph were also roughly handled here, in 1009."*

"A truce with your chronicled victories," said the jester; "if you want a grant of privileges from my cousin John, ground the claims of your townsmen upon the loss of limb and feature, what time Canute slit off the hands, ears, and noses of the Sandwichers, when he landed in 1014."†

"Ay," pursued another of the guests, "or let him bethink himself of Hardicanute's landing here in 1039, when he hung up the mayor by

* These events and dates are correct as to the history of this singular Cinque Port, which bore in early times the brunt of most of the invasions of our island.

§ Canute, in 1014, touched at Sandwich, where he sent ashore all the English hostages, after cutting off their hands, ears and noses.

“ Ask him if he has forg
expedition in 1052,” added
and Harold set all the baron
the stocks, whilst they live
and entertained their sweethe
the town.”

If it was the wish of his
the somewhat irascible Cinque
trate, they succeeded. His pa
the Saxons gave the Normans
only a handle, but a desire to a

There is, indeed, hardly anythi
able in the manners and custo
and immediately subsequent
Conquest, than the sovereign o
the name of an Englishman
the battle of H

"The Normans," says an ancient historian, "became mad with pride ; nothing could restrain their insolence, cruelty, and rapacity. Ladies of the highest rank and greatest beauty who, by any mischance had lost their fathers, brothers, or protectors, were in danger of brutal treatment, violence, or even death from some of the more unscrupulous petty princes or barons of the land. Indeed, after the Conquest, the Normans reduced almost all the English to such a state of servitude that it was a reproach to be called an Englishman. This state of things continued nearly up to the end of John's reign ; though during the troubles of his career, through the instrumentality of one or two of the better and more virtuous of the nobles and knights, the condition of the poor English was in some measure ameliorated.

The Cinque Port Mayor turned from one to the other of his guests, twirled his long moustache, set himself back in his chair, and looked tremendous things, to the no small delight of all around.

"I may suffer, my masters all," he said, "the

King, in some authority I
respect at my own board, fo
ing my hall. Richard of I
Norman of ye all, hath sat
to-day."

" Out upon thee, for a
take a jest," said Mauluc. '
shows itself even in the wine

" You have chosen, Sir k
Mayor, turning fiercely upo
intrude within my house un
yourself unknown. You n
reasons for such secrecy ; b
preserve it, let your tongue
lest I order my guard here
casque with the pommels of

during this controversy, that he had hardly remarked it; and he, accordingly, (during the increasing noise of the party) carried on his suit in a manner so unscrupulous, that he quickly offended the delicacy of the haughty beauty, and brought himself into disfavour, just at the moment his minion Mauluc had entangled himself with the Cinque Port Mayor.

"I tell thee, uncourteous stranger," continued the Mayor, "that ye know no touch of gentle breeding. Your manners proclaim you of the base and popular. You have insulted the Cinque Ports in my presence, and by St. Paul, you shall answer it at dawn."

"Away," said the Lady Bertha, rising and turning away from the King, at the same time taking the arm of her page. "Away, Sir, I condemn myself for listening to one so insolent. You say, you serve the King. I doubt if one so base and rude ever durst set foot in his presence."

"Nay, fair Bertha," returned the King, smiling at her wrath, "consider this matter, and be not altogether angry with your servant. Permit

o o o o o

The Lady Bertha, however, took notice of the suppliant moor chamber by a small door the hall, in high dudgeon ascending the great staircase sought to calm her agitation the corridor.

Hither the King, who had followed, sought her. He repeated draughts he had excitement of whispering a ear, and he was now in one and ready for any act of villainy way.

The Lady Bertha leaning the chamber she had just entered

and closing the door behind him, approached her.

As Bertha turned, upon hearing the clank of an armed tread in her chamber, the monarch seized her rudely in his arms and clasped her in his iron embrace ; but she extricated herself, and, nearly speechless with rage and astonishment, rushed towards the door to summon assistance.

The King, however, anticipated her, and placing himself before the door, seemed to enjoy her state of excitement, as almost speechless with rage she stood regarding him ; the reckless superiority he assumed, at the same time half-dissuading the dignity of her offended pride.

"How is this, ruffian ?" she exclaimed. "You surely forget that I am the daughter of a Norman knight : you mistake me for the offspring of some beggarly serf, who is unable to protect her against violence. Quit the chamber, sirrah, or your life's blood shall answer this assault."

"What ho there !" she cried to the guard who was stationed below the corridor. "Help, I say."

"Blame me not, fair Bertha," pleaded *the* King, again advancing and seizing her hand, at the same time dropping upon his knee. "Blame me not for the excess of passion which has thus driven me to offend. Rather blame your own surpassing loveliness, which is the cause of that effect."

There was now so great a disturbance in the hall below, that the lady's cries for assistance were for some time unheard, and the reckless monarch, who was delighted with the confusion he was creating, might have proceeded to still further extremities, had not the page, who was in waiting at the end of the corridor, come to her assistance.

The monarch was enraged at the interruption, and at the same time remembered the hint Mauluc had given him, of the favour in which Bertha held the stripling.

"How now, thou scornful page," he said, seizing the lad by the breast of his doublet, "I have heard of thy presumptuous conduct. Such temerity in one so base merits a severe chastisement."

The Lady Bertha seeing her favourite in danger, forgot her offended pride, and throwing herself between them, arrested the King's arm, as he was about to strike the page with the dagger he had drawn from his girdle.

"Hurt not the boy," she cried, "I entreat, Sir knight."

The King paused : he could easily have twisted his iron arm from the lady's feeble grasp, and driven his sharp poniard into the bosom of the boy ; but he stood for a moment transfixed, gazing upon his handsome features. He then smiled, as he turned his piercing ken upon the agitated Bertha ; released the page from his strong gripe and sheathed his dagger, as the heavy tread of footsteps were heard approaching the chamber from the corridor.

The Lady Bertha seized the opportunity. "Fly," she said to the page, "conduct some person hither to arrest this fearful madman. He shall pay dearly for this temerity," she continued, as her courage and pride returned with the hope of assistance ;—"his blood be upon his own head."

But the page, to the astonishment of the lady, instead of summoning assistance from the advancing parties, instantly secured the closed door by drawing the huge bolts, by which it was fastened, into their sockets, and shutting all assistance out.

The monarch's attention, meanwhile, seemed quite diverted from the Lady Bertha to the page. He watched the graceful figure of the youth with much apparent curiosity, as he secured the door of the chamber; for during the short struggle which had just taken place, he thought he had made a discovery which considerably interested him.

Be that, however, as it may, the page made fast the door of the chamber to the no small astonishment of the lady, just in the nick of time; for the next moment Sir Gilbert Daundelyonne himself, and several men-at-arms clamoured for admittance.

"In another minute, Sir knight," said the page, dropping on his knee, "you must either divulge your rank, or forfeit your life, for I conceive you wish to preserve your incognito

and your existence ; let me entreat you to think of some plan of escape."

"What means this mysterious conduct, minion?" said Bertha to the page. "Have you lugged yourself with this ruffian to insult me? Come from before the door, sirrah, and admit my father instantly, ere I bid him beat it from its fastenings, and inflict the punishment such conduct merits."

"Bear with me, lady," returned the page. "You must aid me to procure the escape of this person from your father's awakened wrath. It is the King."

The Lady Bertha was now struck with astonishment and dread. The terrible Norman, John of England, stood before her. A secret something, a sort of awe of she knew not what, had pervaded her from the moment his dark orbs had gleamed upon her through the bars of his helmet. She had half suspected the stranger was of high rank, but never dreamed for a moment that it was the Plantagenet himself who was pouring his unscrupulous advances into her ear. Yet there stood the dread monarch of

Well knowing her father
she doubted little but that
found a Norman knight,
chamber — even although
confess himself his son
slaughter him without mis-
stood.

She, therefore, threw
which looked out upon the
hasty glance from it, desired
the moment and escape.

“ But a few minutes more
the guests beneath will be
tress serves, and you may
my page will guide you to
which admits to the queen

the page follow, he drew his blade, and taking it between his teeth, descended to the small green spot before the river in rear of the house.

The clash of weapons and a piercing shriek, proclaimed to the Lady Bertha that their retreat was intercepted. It was even so. When the King, after lowering himself from the window, by aid of the abutments in the masonry, followed by the active page, leapt upon the greensward, he found himself confronted by the young Lord of Folkstone; who, by order of Sir Gilbert Daundelyonne had been superintending the embarkation of his followers on the quay.

Naturally surprised at beholding a man descend from Lady Bertha's chamber window, Lord Folkstone determined to arrest him, and a fierce conflict immediately ensued, which would, in all probability, have ended in the capture of the monarch, had not Walter Mauluc joined him, who just before had been thrust from the hall of the building by order of the Mayor. The two succeeded in gaining a small boat

which was moored beside the stream, an receding tide carried them down the towards the ferry, which at that period between the Fisher's gate and Stonar; whi page succeeded in escaping into the house

Considering the importance of the expe in which John was engaged, we might r ably have supposed the present adventure have satisfied him for the time, and th would have been well content to have good his retreat to his apartments in the and by snatching a few hours' repose refi himself, ere dawn called him to the bu embarkation.

But the disposition of the King was now into play. It was one of his peculiarities, matters of great weight pressed upon his to endeavour to divert himself with the frivolous pursuits, and this too, at the p moment one might have supposed him total grossed with the import of the matter in

He was now in one of these insane moods companioned by one as reckless, unscrup

and profligate as himself, seemed determined to give full indulgence to his riotous and savage propensities. He was in one of those dangerous moods that are yet to be seen in the wild, untamed spirits of the land. From the stern, revengeful Norman King, burnt up with inflaming wrath against Philip of France, and with hand stretched forth to grasp the person of Arthur of Britain, he had, for the moment, descended to the thoughtless reveller, determined to seek amusement in the lowest hostels of the town.

In this mood, the King and his companion floated down the stream till they reached the ferry, which, at that time, plied opposite the town of Stonar. He was somewhat annoyed that the page, whom he had resolved to bring with him, had escaped; but he determined to summon the boy before him in the morning.

The town of Stonar, scarcely a vestige of which now remains to point out its site, stood upon the sea-beach, about half-a-mile on the Thanet side of Sandwich. At this period it was a place of some importance, though from the increasing prosperity of Sandwich, and the

change in the Wantsune, together with constant incursions made upon it by French, who never failed to wreak their vengeance upon its walls whenever opportunity offered, it was at an early period ruined.

Between the men of Sandwich and Stonar there was a deadly feud. Like the Cinque Porters, they were a sort of rude, amphibious race, fierce and savage of nature; and the situation being upon the beachy girdle of the ocean, a mark for the enemy to pounce on, they knew no protection but the cross and the sword.

Like the Sandwichers, too, the men of Stonar were excellent sailors; but still they were a distinct race. They were even more fierce, piratical, and lawless community of citizens than their neighbours. The town having in very ancient times been distinct even from the Isle of Thanet, and entirely surrounded by the sea and the estuary called the Wantsune, they lived a sort of wild piratical life, and were much given to the practice of paultery, that is to say, of plundering

whatever unhappy vessels happened to be wrecked upon the surrounding coast.*

It was from such practices that the enmity and deadly hatred of the inhabitants of the two neighbouring towns had begun and had increased until, like the quarrel between the houses of Capulet and Montague, it oft-times

“Disturbed the quiet of their streets,”

and caused the citizens

“To quench the fire of their pernicious rage
With purple fountains issuing from their veins.”

This was more especially the case, since Sir John de Stonar and Sir Ralph Sandwich, who considered themselves the patrons of the adverse towns, for their own pride and purposes took up the quarrel of their townsfolk, and

* The inhabitants of Thanet were much given to the practice of plundering vessels in distress ; albeit they have always likewise been held in good repute for their boldness in going off to stranded ships. The practice of plundering wrecks they used to call paultering, and their share they named guile share, i.e. cheating share.

fomented their animosity by every means in their power.

As soon as the King and Mauluc (after being whirled about amongst the different craft and vessels at anchor—for they had no oars in the small boat they had jumped into—reached the Ferry, they were hailed by the guard at the Fisher's Gate, who threatened to fire at them if they did not draw to the side, and come ashore.

"Those who want us must take us," said Mauluc; "we can't stop if we would."

"Look to that boat there," said the officer of the guard, "those drunken scoundrels will be drowned else."

Upon this, four or five men-at-arms sprang into a boat which lay beside the bank, and with a few strokes came alongside in the rapid stream, captured, and brought them back, when the King and Mauluc, nothing loth, immediately leapt ashore.

"Whence come, and whither bound, my masters?" said the person who appeared the

principal of those assembled without the gate.

"You seem marvellously ill-provided for a long voyage."

"What's that to thee, knave?" said the King. "Suffice it, we would pass into the town without more hindrance."

"Not without more hindrance, Sir Knight," returned the guard, who now saw he had persons of distinction to deal with, instead of common soldiers from one of the vessels in the haven. "Unless I know more reason for letting you pass our gates than your own desire to pass them, you'll stand but small chance of a lodging within the town to-night. Not the King himself should enter at my post here after sun-down, without a Cinque Port order signed by the Mayor."

"We're from the King's ship, friend," said Mauluc, "and have lost our oars by accident, and floated down the stream. Look into our boat; it hath the royal arms painted on the stern."

"May be so, comrade," said the guard; "nevertheless, some are said to bear the royal

arms who have no right to them,—witness present royal preparation. Look into the Gregory, and see if it be as he says. You get no admittance, any how, to-night,” continued the Cinque Porter. “There’s the guard-fire you to lay before, my masters, or the host of the ferry, there, beside the gate. But no admittance into Sandwich to-night.”

“Thou art but a surly churl, at best,” said the King; “and thy tongue is as ready with reason as impertinence. To lay thee by the sword would teach thee civiler language. Take care to report not thy speech of this momentous quarter which may cause thee to be punished quick in the earth as a disgrace to the crown. By God’s wrath, I am minded to strike where I stand.”

“Best not,” said the sturdy Cinque Porter laughing, “lest I smite again. We are here in Kent, and my defence is heavy on my own; there, pass on, friend, ere worse come. Our dungeons are deep and cold for prisoners, and I’ve the royal orders to take up a

amongst the King's power to-night, and secure all deserters from his vessels."

"Thou shalt rue this impertinence, sirrah," said the King. "When next we meet, look to it."

"Go to, I care not for thee," returned the man; "I am a free burgess of Sandwich, and consequently thy equal. I defy thy threats, and if thou'lt take equal arms I'll try conclusions with thee where we stand. Draw, if you be a man."

"Agreed," said the King, "provided if I gain the first advantage, you admit me into the town."

"And so bring myself under the displeasure of the Mayor?" returned the other; "well, be it so, I fear not the result. Have at thee, carter!"

Upon this, about half-a-dozen of the guard, and as many half-drunken archers, who had been diceing and drinking in the low hostel in which passengers were wont to wait for the ferry-boat, with great glee formed a ring, and John found himself in a moment involved

in a quarrel with the Cinque Port officer, a rabble around to see fair play.

The fellow drew his huge blade from scabbard, and swinging it round his head, a willow twig, brought it before him, and stood at guard.

"Come on, Sir boaster," he said, "I'll show thee the weight of a seaman's arm. By Saint Gundulph of Rochester, I'll fight thee both, Knight and Esquire, and give ye the advantage of your closed visors into a bargain."

The Cinque Porter was, in truth, a tremendous fellow, standing nearly six feet four height, and being clad in full armour, except that his casque had no visor, he was equally armed with the adversary he purposed contending with.

"I've altered my mind," said John, looking at his antagonist for a moment. "It would be too great a fatigue to me to chase thee. Go, fellow, I may not disgrace my weapon. If my esquire, here, likes to induce thee," he said, turning off, "he has my licence and licence to do so."

This announcement was received by a perfect yell of derision.

"Ha, ha !" said the Sandwicher, "I thought what manner of men we had to deal withal. I would I might see thy visage, so that I might know thee again. By the mass, I'd proclaim both of ye as cowardly caitiffs to-morrow morning before the whole army."

"Darest thou pledge thyself to that?" said the King, turning and approaching him again.

"With my existence," said the fellow. "I'll meet thee anywhere thou darest appoint, and lend thee a buffet before the King's face, an thou wilt! Come, I'll lay thee a hundred crowns I do it."

"Be it so," said the King. "Hark in thine ear; be upon the quay beside the royal barque. Ask for Walter Mauluc, and without more ado redeem your wager. I pledge myself to answer it."

"Go to," returned the Sandwicher, turning away with a sneer, "if thou darest show thy nose, Sir Mauluc, I'll tweak it for thee glori-

ously :—I will, by the Lord, and pouch crowns into the bargain.”

“ Win them and have them,” said the King. “ Meanwhile, as you refuse us admission with your gates to-night, we must try for lodgings further a-field. Order your ferry-man to wait us across this muddy ditch, that we may try our luck at the town of Stonar.”

CHAPTER XI.

MORE MATTER FOR A MAY MORNING.

Romeo, the hate I bear thee, can afford
No better term than this—Thou art a villain.

Tybalt, the reason that I have to love thee
Doth much excuse the appertaining rage
To such a greeting;—Villain I am none;
Therefore, fare well, I see thou know'st me not.

SHAKESPEARE.

WHEN the King and Mauluc had been landed on the other side of the river, they walked leisurely along the road towards the town of Stonar. The road was by no means a safe one at night, for the marshes or low lands on this side were frequently inundated by the sea; so much so, that the town itself in winter was often in danger of being destroyed, and

high ~~embankments~~ were thrown up in various parts to secure the lands bordering from the tidal sea on the side by which the King and Mauluc approached the town too, there was at the period a quantity of stunted underwood and something like a small wood though the trees from their near situation to the sea had a bare and sickly look. Such as it was, however, formed a sort of pleasure for the inhabitants of the town by day, and was not unfrequently the haunt of rogues and dangerous ruffians at night. The place, indeed, had been as often the scene of the livers' rendezvous as of the murderers' lurking place: and if the wood could have spoken, it would have told many tales of maidens beguiled, travellers stopped, quarrels put to the arbitration of the sword, and other deeds of ill-omen.

As the King and Mauluc entered this plantation which stood some quarter of a mile between town and town, they were aware of a party of men just emerging from its shadow, and they resolved to stop and observe their business at that hour. They therefore drew back behind the

embankment, as the parties approached the open space betwixt the sea-wall and the wood.

The new comers were three in number, and their bearing, and the hot haste with which two of them stepped from the covert, threw down their cloaks, drew their swords, and placed themselves, showed that the business in which they were engaged was a duel. The alacrity, however, of the first two who entered upon the open space, was by no means answered by the third person. He walked leisurely after the two gallants who had preceded him, his tone of expostulation plainly indicating that he wished to avoid proceeding to extremity.

The dress and bearing of the three proclaimed them above the common herd. Two of them, to all appearance, belonged to the higher class, the third, who seemed the least inclined for strife, of the better sort of citizens of the town.

"Gentlemen," he said, as he stood before his excited antagonists, who were two brothers, "I have thus far accompanied

you, but again I ask, may not so vindictive business be foregone? That you hate me apparent; but must that hate necessarily lead on to death?"

"Yes!" returned the elder of the two opposed. "Even so. Thou art the blaster of our fortunes by thy suit to our sister; and whilst she prodigally throws away her love on thee, whose connexion we desire not, she disobeys the wishes of her friends, and rejects for thy beggarly sake, a proper and fitting match."

"And this is all you have to urge against me?"

"No, not all!" returned the other. "Our houses have ever been at feud. Thou art of Sandwich—we of Stonar. We desire nothing in common with thee; nay, we have forbidden thee to hold converse with our sister; yet still like some common robber thou hauntest our walls, and disturbest our rest with thy love-siddities. In fine, we think thee unworthy her."

"Let not that make a quarrel," said t

lover, "I think so too—have urged it to her myself."

"We came not hither to talk," returned the other brother. "Draw, villain."

It was lucky for the youth who thus appeared to have brought the wrath of the two brothers upon himself, that he was partially clothed in armour, which somewhat equalized the odds against him, as his opponents were merely dressed in the buff suits usually worn under harness. They, however, assailed him with so much fury that he was necessitated to call forth all his energies in order to save himself from death.

Placing his back against a tree, he managed with the long blade with which he was armed to parry many of the blows which, with their lighter weapons, they aimed at him; but as they evidently sought his life, whilst he merely fought on the defensive, it was clear that the odds must soon tell against him.

"Does your Highness mean to interfere in this duel?" said Mauluc to the King. "Me-thinks that youth fights well, and deserves

succour. I marvel what like is the maide whose beauty could so entrance a man as to make him take both abuse and blows thus patiently. Will your Highness permit me to step forth and engage one of these malapert citizens? Methinks the youth cannot hold on against odds much longer."

"Mark!" said the King, "another actor appears to save you labour. Nay, by St. Paul, Sir Mauluc, is not this our minion, the skirted page?"

As Mauluc looked forth from the angle of the sea-wall, he beheld a fourth person step up and join the duellists; who, although he was not clad in the same garments in which they had so recently seen the youth, was, to all appearance, the Lady Bertha's page.

Whether or not he had been attracted to the spot by the clash of weapons, or that he was passing along the road by accident, he quickly hastened to the scene of action, and drawing his weapon placed himself beside the weaker party.

"I wear a sword," he said to the brothers, as they paused at this interruption, "and cannot

see a fellow-man oppressed. Shame on ye, gentlemen, thus to press a foe to death by odds."

The brothers were now heated with action and resolved on blood.

"Stand back, stripling," said he who appeared the elder of the two, a tall, muscular youth. "Stand back, I say, thou foolish boy, or else embrace thy death."

But the page, if the page it were, although so light and effeminate in figure as to appear no match for the bulky antagonist who addressed him, returned his scorn with interest, and quickly drew the assault upon himself.

"You're noble, Sir, no doubt," he said, "and doubtless have justice on your side; but your deeds smack something of the coward. Nay," he continued, "I'll drill your doublet for you, if you feel inclined to proceed in a more honourable encounter."

In fact, the stripling seemed as full of spirit as a young colt just broke loose, and addressed

himself to the encounter with so much activity and resolution, that his antagonist was fain to draw back in order to save himself from the weapon; and such was the skill the new comer eventually displayed, that he ran his opponent through the body and laid him dead upon the greensward. This placed the duel upon more equal footing, and it would now have been fought out by the other two combatants, the new comer merely sheathing his weapon and carelessly looking on, had they not been again interrupted.

We have already said that the place bore an evil report, and the present instance showed that such reputation was not altogether unfounded.

Whilst the King and Mauluc stood gazing upon the scene before them, and were upon the point of stepping forth, and covering themselves to the combatants, the King being determined to seize upon the eccentric page, whose prowess had considerably astonished him), they found themselves

suddenly pounced upon from behind by a grisly horde of banditti who had stolen unperceived up the alley in which they stood.

"A prize, my masters all," cried the chief of the party; "all waifs and strays without the walls to-night belong to the free men of Thanet."

Whilst one half the band encompassed the King and his companion, the others rushed past and assailed the combatants, whom they quickly captured, the page alone escaping into the covert, and evading them.

Meanwhile the King and Mauluc, although surprised, instantly drew their weapons and laid resolutely about them, keeping the ruffians from coming to close quarters.

They would, nevertheless, have been quickly captured, had not a picket of the town guard of Stonar been heard approaching the wood, and the glare of the torches they carried was seen the next moment glancing through the thicket.

Upon this, the gentlemen of Thanet, as they termed themselves, were fain to draw off and

The guards came rapidly up where they had heard the sounds and quickly stumbled upon the youth who had been slain in the encounter.

"Ha! my masters all," cried "here's goodly work toward; I were not deceived. These lewd have been molesting some of our people and scour the dyke, whilst I look here."

The King and his companion have made off, but they were surrounded, and captured.

"This is a business!" said the official, as he knelt down and rendered countenance of the slain, "why

men?" he continued, as he turned the light of his torch upon the monarch and his companion.

"We do;" said the King, who began to enjoy the officer's importance.

"Come, that's candid at all events," returned the officer. "You've been pretty busy here, anyhow. Who, and what are you?"

"We don't feel bound to answer that question," returned the monarch; "at any rate, not to thee."

"I thought as much," said the guard, "Truculent knaves, and resolute in evil. Take up the body, my mates, and lead on. I'll take these vermin before those who know how to enforce answer and shriek at the same moment. Fall in there, shoulder pikes, right about face, quick march."

When the party had cleared the ford, and waded through more than one swamp, they approached the walls of the somewhat singular town, and being admitted within the Gate, instantly marched to the bailiff's house,

who was quickly aroused from his bed by the welcome news that the body of his eldest son had just been found without the walls, and that two of the men who had slain him were captured and in custody of the night-guard.

Stonar. Like Sandwich, was at this time filled with troops, many of whom, however, the shipping served, had been embarked. Still the town, at this hour wrapped in slumber, contained a large quantity of knights and their followers within its walls, several of whom were lodged in the chief bailiff's house.

The King and Mauluc, meanwhile, having been conveyed into an apartment constituting the hall of the building, were immediately interrogated by the bailiff in the presence of several of the nobles, quartered in his house.

The culprits, however, flatly refused to give any account of themselves, or the manner in which the deceased person had met his death, or even to raise their visors before the assemblage.

"We are of the King's household,"

Mauluc, "and under a vow not to unhelm upon English ground. Unless force, therefore, be used, we decline complying with the order."

"You stand accused of a foul murder, sirrah," returned the bailiff; "and, by Heaven's grace! unless you can clear yourselves, or give some better account of your being upon the spot where the body was found, you shall die the death."

"It follows not, Sir Bailiff," said the monarch, "that because men were met whilst pursuing a path across your swamp without there, and where some officious knaves happened to stumble upon an unhandsome corse, that such persons have done a murder. As well might we accuse those who accuse us, and who in reality were in contact with the body ere we ourselves were brought back to the spot."

"Exactly so," said the bailiff, "I'm glad I've brought ye back to that point at all events. Strike off their helmets, men, without more words on the matter."

"Come, my masters," said the chief of the

guard approaching. "shall I unmuzzle wisdoms? methinks I long to look upon which I am confident have the hang brand upon them, or they would not chary of the day-light."

"Force off their helmets, without more lay," said the bailiff, as the King drew when the official approached.

The man-at-arms, upon this, was about to upon the monarch and grasp his helm, when he was accommodated by so severe a blow from gauntlet of the King, that his teeth rattled his head like a box of dominoes, while the soldier who was about to officiate upon him received a similar favour.

"Tear off their casques, villains," roared the enraged bailiff; "they shall to the dungeon the water-tower as soon as I have seen their faces."

"It shall not need," said the King, standing with great dignity to the end of the hall before which the bailiff and his party stood. "We will be our own armourers." So saying, he unfastened the small hooks

secured his helmet, and threw it upon the board.

The bailiff and his followers looked upon the severe, dark features, curly beard, and jet black locks for a moment in some awe; the next, they beheld several of the assembled knights sink upon one knee.

"God be here," said the bailiff, who was ignorant of the King's person, "what means this?"

"That, traitor as you are," returned the monarch, "you have no knee for your King, Sir bailiff. But, come, I forgive you; rise, and order wine to be served. The dawn approaches, and I must back to Sandwich without delay. We trifle time here."

CHAPTER XII.

THE SPY SYSTEM.

Mad world, mad kings, mad composition.

———To know the meaning

Of dangerous majesty, when, perchance, it frowns
More upon humour than advised respect.

SHAKESPEARE

THE first faint streaks of early dawn found the monarch and his companion safely arrived at their quarters in the castle we have described as situate just without the walls of the town of Sandwich. How the remaining hour between the time we have left them in the town of Stonar, and their return was passed, the poet of history does not tell. With the return of daylight, however, the sterner disposition of the monarch returned; and, as he threw himself into a cumbrous oaken chair which was

one massive table, was all the furniture which graced the thick-walled and small apartment, he bent a stern and scowling glance upon the companion of his reckless pleasures, as if half inclined to pick a quarrel with him ; an accession of ill humour which the fatigue of a night passed without rest had caused.

A silver salver stood upon the table, which, with several flasks of liquor, had been left there the night before, and without speaking the monarch pointed to them.

Mauluc, however, who (ever suiting his bearing to the mood of the King), was standing demurely before the table with hands crossed and eyes upon the ground, saw not the motion of the King.

"How now, Sir ?" said the monarch, sharply, " we would drink ; fill, and hand the wine."

The minion with an obedient start immediately darted to the table, seized upon a flask, and pouring some of its contents into a goblet, was about to hand it.

"Who bade thee give me hypocras?" said the King; "I like it not so early. I had lief swallow rat's-bane."

"Will your Highness taste pigment, m or claret?" inquired Mauluc; "all are here

"I'll touch neither, sirrah," said the King. "on second thoughts, the sour cyder of that headed Stonar bailiff, added to the claret of Sandwich mayor, hath made me sick. Sir knave, order those lazy varlets to sound *reveille*. 'Tis time we thought of business; day has dawned some time."

"If I might presume to advise," began Mauluc, with great deference.

"Well, Sir," said the monarch, "thou ever presumptuous, when thou darest. give thee leave to presume; now, what would your wisdom advise?"

"That, as your Highness must necess

* Persons of high rank indulged in a great variety of liquours, as well as meats, at this period. They had venison, morat, mead, hypocras, claret, cyder, perry, &c.

feel some slight degree of fatigue, you permit me to arouse your people, and order them to prepare the bath."

"Tis well," said the King; "do so quickly, and return hither. We would hold discourse with you upon the events of the night."

The esquire withdrew to execute his mission, and presently returned; when the King, again pointing to the liqueurs upon the table, signified that he had again changed his mind.

"Mead, I think, your Highness pointed to," said Mauluc, in doubt as to which he must serve.

"No, Sir, give me cyder," said the King; "my throat's parched, and would fain be washed by a copious draught."

The esquire handed the goblet upon bended knee. Upon other occasions—for instance, whilst he was the companion of his royal master's pleasant vices—Mauluc might have ventured to take glass for glass, as his equal for the time; but he well knew when majesty was dangerous, and how to "alter when he

alteration found." Any freedom in the present mood of the dangerous monarch might have been resented by a stroke of the royal dagger in the mouth.

"That page, Sir," said the King; "wouldst thou learn more about him. What knowest thou of his history?"

"Scarcely more, my Liege, than what I have already told your Highness. Whilst at Daundelyonne Castle, I failed of learning aught about him, as he was then almost a stranger. Gondibert, the Knight's jester, seemed the only person who was well acquainted with the lad; and, from the frequent conferences I saw them hold together, I suspect some near relationship between the pair."

"Take measures to have him watched," said the King, "and arrange so that both he and the Lady Bertha go on board the royal barque this morning. I would have his every motion noted," continued the monarch, "since I have suspicions regarding him which I shall not divulge, even to thee. Enough—look forth

from the embrasure in the turret: we hear the neigh of steeds without."

Sandwich Castle, which John had chosen for his quarters, on occasion of the embarkation of his power from that Cinque Port, we have already described as situate about half a bow-shot from the walls of the town, upon the Deal side. Except the esquire we have seen in close attendance upon him, and his own immediate body-guard, who were located in the few chambers this small fortress boasted, it was his present pleasure to be entirely alone. On some occasions, John chose no eyes but those of the especial favourites of the moment to pry into the transactions of his private hours.

At this period of our history, the monarch held in estimation and regard one of the greatest men of his day, a follower, whose devotion to his cause, and affection for his person no erring conduct in the management of the affairs of the kingdom, no inconstancy even towards himself, nay, not even the continual development of the cruel and tyrannous disposition of the King could alienate from his service. Hubert de

...of his confidence
was, — that any of the
dom. To the bosom
as it was his pleasure
were all his troubles,
some of his errors imp
to him, his counsellor
in need, his patient, et
fair and foul, would the
off all reserve in his
feared fully to develope
in those hours he set a
of his grovelling propensi

His crafty mind wan
occasions it were best to
with those of his favour
managing the more weight

suit his lighter hours ; employ as the weapons of his vengeance, and degrade to the depths of ruin when no longer serviceable.

To Hubert, the trusty Hubert, were his most secret and trustworthy affairs committed. He was his safeguard and mediator — even at this period of his reign—betwixt the hot and fiery barons he so continually annoyed and vexed by the wrongs and insults put upon them

At the present time Hubert de Burgh was the chief manager of the expedition, a sort of general-in-chief, who contrived to keep together the fiery elements he was mixed up with, and to conduct them in the path they were to pursue, whilst he himself appeared in his management to follow the suggestions of the overbearing, even while he lured them to his own path. Such was Hubert de Burgh amongst the warlike power of John : a man of rare mind, high integrity, and devoted loyalty ; and although he seemed to bend before the opinions of all—meek as the meanest esquire—yet possessing perhaps the boldest heart as he possessed the clearest head, of all that Norman host.

On this night Hubert de Burgh, together with the Earls of Essex, Pembroke, and several other nobles had been quartered at the monastery of the Carmelites,* or White Friars, then situate at the south-western side of the town, between the ramparts and new street, some remains of the foundation of which building are yet to be seen. It was a monastery of considerable extent, and had been established by William, Lord Clinton of Folkstone and Goulstone, the father of the young esquire already mentioned in this history.

The King himself had ordered apartments to be prepared for him in this monastery, as it was the largest in the town; but, hating the clergy, he had suddenly changed his mind, and taken up his quarters, as we have seen without the walls, giving directions to his chamberlain, Hubert, to occupy them in his stead, and assume the entire superin-

* The Carmelites in truth came to England in the beginning of the twelfth century. They were constituted to a rule and order, by Honorius the Third, by the name of "The Brothers of the order of the blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel."

tendence of the embarkation of his troops, in order that he himself might throw off all the cares of the expedition, and hold an insane revel in the streets of the town.

Accordingly, when Walter Mauluc, in obedience to the King's request, stepped into the small turret chamber, which opened from the apartment they occupied, and looked forth upon the greensward before the town wall, he beheld the chamberlain, Hubert de Burgh, attended by a plump of spears, his pennon fluttering behind him, in full gallop towards the royal quarter. As the eye of the esquire glanced from the narrow embrasure over the green space between the castle and the town, and then ranged round over the walls and buildings, looking fresh and fair in the clear morning, the bladed grass upon the slopes of the ramparts, heavy with dew, and glittering like jewels in the morning sun, the scene which presented itself—although then, perhaps, not an uncommon one in our own days—would have been considered somewhat curious. Upon the ramparts were to be seen many hundreds

of the infantry of the King's army, who, finding no quarters after their heavy day's march had there, with the readiness with which the soldiery of the time were wont to take up the quarters in the open air, thrown themselves down for the night. These men, together with several companies of bowmen, from different counties, were now getting under arms and mustered by their different leaders, preparing to march into the town, in order to procure refreshment ere they were embarked.

On the space likewise between the castle and the gates of the town, on either hand were now to be seen emerging from the freshly opened portals, hundreds of esquires, page-boys, and all the attendants upon a knight's host, careering about the fields, examining steeds, consulting upon casualties which had happened in the crowded stables during the night, and attending to what was needful as necessary, as careful keepers of the noble animals about to be embarked.

As soon as Walter Mauluc observed the approach of the King's chamberlain, he entered the chamber, and announced to

coming. At the same moment an attendant, the first who had ventured to approach the royal presence since daybreak, noiselessly glided into the apartment, and standing mute at the entrance he had barely passed, awaited licence to be permitted speech.

The appearance of this man was somewhat singular. Instead of the body-servant of a powerful sovereign, he looked the personification of an executioner's assistant. To the most villanous features, and diabolical cast of countenance, was added a form such as in early youth the mind is wont to furnish forth for the demon of a fairy tale. His body, although distorted and deformed, possessed immense strength, the muscles of his arms and legs shewing prominently in the short and sleeveless dress he wore, as those of some posture-master of our own days ; whilst on his ghastly and livid face, his close-cropped beard of the deepest black gave him a most sinister appearance. He was a Breton by birth, and from his personal deformity was generally known by the sobriquet of de Bossu, or,

the hunchbacked. Indeed, his very look proclaimed him :—

A fellow by the hand of nature marked,
Quoted and signed to do a deed of shame.

Such as he was, however, he had been recommended to the service of John, as a fit instrument for some piece of duty the monarch had required at the hands of a servant with a good sword and an unscrupulous conscience, and his execution of the commission entrusted to him had led on to fortune, John eventually keeping him near his person, and employing him from time to time in those services which required secrecy, despatch, craft, and courage.

That he deserved such trust and employment was apparent to all who knew him, since his sagacity and cunning were extraordinary when employed as a spy ; and when any intricate business or mysterious matter was to be fathomed or transacted, the crafty bravo and his myrmidons were released from attendance and put upon the trail.

At the present time, being the perfection of a

dumb waiter, and swift serving man, he was on duty as valet to the eccentric King; and his appearance, as he glided within the entrance, announced that the bath Mauluc had ordered to be prepared was in readiness.

So soon as this singular looking valet observed that the eye of the monarch had glanced upon him, he was about to withdraw as noiselessly as he had entered—that being the etiquette. But the monarch permitted his glance to meet his eye a second time, with a look of intelligence readily understood, and he remained fixed in his first position.

“Go, Sir Mauluc,” said the King, “receive the report of our chamberlain in the hall below whilst we bathe and break our fast; anon we purpose getting to horse and joining our assembled nobles in the town; that done, be master of your time for the next half hour.”

The esquire bowed low and withdrew.

“Hark you hither, sirrah,” said the monarch, turning to his attendant when they were alone; “we have a mission to entrust you with, which requires some of the craft, secrecy, and manage-

ment we have reason to know you perceived. You have seen the Knight of Daundelyonn know his person? Good. In his daughter's service there is a page. You have noted the youth?" continued the King, as the king suffered his stern features to relax into a gentler intelligence. "You have even perhaps noted the intimacy between the boy and his mistress. Is it not so? speak, sirrah; we know of our own depth of observation."

"I have, my Liege," said the official, and his hoarse voice be heard for the first time. "I noted certain love passages between the boy and the lady, whose face drew all eyes to her during the time your highness gave audience to the Cinque Port barons yesterday after arrival at the house of the mayor."

"You think then there is something wrong between them from what you have observed? You think the haughty beauty loves this boy, and that the boy, despite the peril of entering her passion, returns it?"

"I do, my Liege," said the attendant.

"And what fate," said the King, "awaits

youth, should the stern Knight of Daundelyonne discover their love?"

"The death of one by the knight's hand," returned the ruffian; "perhaps his own offspring will share the same fate."

"You are right in that," said the monarch, "though in one small instance your sagacity has been suffered to sleep. We have ourselves made an amusing and interesting discovery in that quarter last night. The Lady Bertha's passion is likely to end but in a dream of love after all. That page, Sir knave, is a woman in disguise."

The ogre, without betraying surprise, merely suffered his piercing eyes to open wide, elevating his shaggy eyebrows, and following the King with his glance, as the monarch paced in high glee up and down the small chamber.

"Hark'ee," continued the King, "we have seen this damsel in two several characters last night, and she has much interested us. You understand me? there is some mystery attached to her. It is for thee to fathom it ere we start, and also to take care that she accompanies the

expedition. We appoint thee guardian angel over her person ; she must be ours ; and above all, if you see the esquire Mauluc approach her in the way of gallantry, you have our command to drive your dagger to the hilt in his vitals."

The ruffian's eye sparkled, and his hand wandered unconsciously towards that part of his belt where the ready weapon hung, in token of his readiness to serve his royal patron. This was one of the many eccentricities of John's crooked policy. In his pleasures, as in matters of graver import, his dealings were ever double. It seemed, he had no spark of confidence in the honesty of this poor compounded clay, man, but ever set his instruments as spies upon each other, the consequence of which ignoble treachery was certain failure in whatever he undertook. Suspicion, jealousy, and distrust of all around him seemed the prevailing qualities of his mind during his graver moments, whilst again in his gayer mood he appeared careless of all save enjoyment of the present hour.

"Yes," he continued, as he dismissed his attendants after he had taken the refreshment of

bath, and arrayed himself in a gorgeous of chain mail, made somewhat lighter than intended for the battle field ; " we will use gentle Mauluc in our service, but not permit to grow upon us. His ambitious spirit to the lovely Bertha for a bride ; *that* hardly be at present. Service may purchase such reward, and to say truth, he seen faithful and unscrupulous in our cause. Bertha Daundelyonne, she is a prize worthy her devotion to our cause than anything require hath yet performed. We must not of mating her and disposing of the lands Daundelyonne to any follower ; at all events, we fulfil the engagement already entered into in our brother's reign. The Lord of Folk-must seek some other bride."

The King now rang a small silver bell which upon the table, a signal that the privacy it was his constant pleasure to indulge in the early part of the day, might be broken on, and half a dozen esquires immediately in attendance. Shortly after, he descended the hall of the castle, a gloomy, thick-walled

apartment, dimly lighted by its narrow windows on either side, and one huge iron lamp which was suspended from its arched roof. Here John gave audience to Hubert de Burgh, and issued his orders ere he met those assembled chieftains whose followers had not already been embarked, and their vessels towed out to sea the day before.

To Hubert, amongst other orders, he gave directions to levy contributions upon all the religious houses in the town of Sandwich and Stonar; in other words, to rob the church, a practice he was especially fond of, and never failed to exercise in his expeditions, whenever in want of the sinews of war.

“ These fat-headed clergymen are rich in this Cinque Port, good Hubert,” he said; “ and we shall on our return visit their coffers at more leisure. Meanwhile, do thou squeeze from their hoards some imprisoned angels for present use, ere we depart. The tide, you say, serves not for many hours in this muddy haven, an accident which gives time for matters of business; and we mean to ensure these Cinque Ports in the pri-

privileges they claim. We see their value, and will grant the indulgences given them by precedent kings."⁸

⁸ John was greatly the friend of the Cinque Ports, and of all maritime affairs.

JOHN OF ENGLAND.

fail in identifying it with the same town of a few centuries back, so completely changed is it in its streets and thoroughfares, so demolished in all its monastic remains, so ruined in its embattled towers, its walls, gate-houses, and ramparts. All, all are gone which could tell of the reign of John. Nay, the very buildings which were reared during the reign of a succeeding line of kings and which played their part in the wars of England during the palmy days of the Cinque Ports, are almost effaced from the surface of the earth. "Green mounds," as Sir Walter says, "and shattered ruins alone remain to tell of the whereabouts of those noble buildings of the days of the Norman kings and knights of old.

The knights are dust,
Their swords are rust,
Their souls are with the saints, we trust.

On this morning the streets and thoroughfares of Sandwich displayed a bustling appearance, and even the green pastures on its one side, and the roads which traversed the marshes and swampy grounds on the other, were filled with actors in the stirring scene.

Within the town, we have already said, a part of the warlike power of John was gathered, together with many of the nobles and their followers who accompanied him in his expedition.

"All furnished, all in arms," they were to be seen in all the bustle of preparation whilst the waters of the Haven which flowed on the Thanet side of the town being filled with high-decked vessels of war, a perpetual forest of masts extended along its tortuous course, as the vessels lay waiting for the tide to waft them out to sea with their warlike freightage.

Meanwhile, acting upon the hint he had received, the crafty de Bossu had used all diligence in endeavouring to ascertain the whereabouts of the page the King had described to him and gather something of his history. Mingling amongst the followers of the Daundelyonne, he endeavoured to sift them upon the subject they were embarking. He could only learn, however, that the youth had been missing that morning, but was at the present moment

attendance upon his lady. Those whom the cunning de Bossu questioned spoke, nevertheless, somewhat mysteriously about the page. They seemed to think that the great favour he had so suddenly crept into with their lady avoured of the marvellous. They also hinted that more than one amongst them had not failed to mark that he appeared sometimes possessed with the power of being in two places at once. They suspected that even his surpassing beauty told against him, and that not to mince the matter, he had dealings with the devil, and could translate himself at pleasure into whatever form he pleased.

As soon, therefore, as the bravo had gathered all the information he could upon the subject of the page, he resolved that in order to obey to the letter the instructions of the King, it was necessary that he should see the lad with his own eyes, since now he was in a measure placed under his surveillance. In virtue, therefore, of his situation as an attendant upon John, he passed along the green bank beside the river, and introduced himself amongst the guards and re-

runners in waiting at the house of the n where the King was himself expected. H the principal apartment he found a crov nobles, knights, and ladies, who were to board the royal barque, amongst whom the Bertina Daundelyonne, having just receiv especial order to that effect, was in waiting her attendants.

Under pretence of searching for some amidst the gay assemblage, de Bossu appro so near them that he could overhear their versation ; he also marked the dress w the youth, which consisted merely o graceful habiliments of a sort of minst troubadour of the period, his doublet hav conical hood attached, which could be dra pleasure, like a monk's cowl, over his hea face. The dress, however, plain as it w off to advantage the graceful figure of the whose exceeding beauty could hardly f striking all who beheld him.

Leaving the mayor's house, the brave re-threaded his way through the town to the castle, and, as he approached the ran

on turning the corner of one of the narrow streets, his steps were arrested in astonishment as he beheld to all appearance the very person he had so recently seen in the apartment he had just left—the Lady Bertha's page.

At first the hireling thought he must have been deceived: the street was thronged, and the lad mingled amongst the crowd, and was lost for the moment, as a large party of bowmen came with swinging pace down the street, and made for the river's bank. He, however, quickened his steps, and again distinctly beheld, as he thought, the Lady Bertha's page, the only difference in his dress being a light hauberk of steel, which appeared to have been hastily thrown over his minstrel's tunic; a stout weapon at his side, and a round target suspended from his neck.

The lad appeared anxious to avoid observation; he looked carefully and cautiously around him. As he stopped suddenly before the low-arched entrance of the hospital of St. John,

JOHN OF ENGLAND.

It was situate on the north-west side of the corn-market, and, after a hasty glance or two to observe if he was followed, he stooped and darted through the opening.

As de Bossu prepared to follow, he found that he was not the only person apparently engaged in the chase, inasmuch as two of the guard came almost breathless up to the spot and accosted him.

"Has a lad passed this way?" said the first.
"appeared the head constable, "dressed so like a minstrel."

"No," said de Bossu, "not to my knowledge."

"We tracked him almost to this place a minute back," said the constable.
"have entered the hospital, here."

"Ha!" exclaimed de Bossu, "I bethink me. I did see such a young fellow he turned to the right, and passed there towards the corn-market."

"Gramercy," said the other, "I was not mistaken in my man:

"Stay!" said de Bossu, "perhaps I can assist you in the search. What offence has this springald committed?"

"Merely murder," said the constable; "nothing else, so far as I know; that is to say, he is suspected of that crime. The son of the bailiff of Stonar was found last night lying dead beside the town dyke, and it has been traced to this youngster."

So saying, the men pursued their way, and, disappearing round the corner, entered the corn-market.

If de Bossu meant to mislead the constable in their search by setting them, as he thought, on a wrong scent, he missed his mark, as in sending them round the corner of the street they were sure to intercept the person they sought, if he passed out at the other side. Accordingly, as he himself hastened into the hospital, the mysterious page passed out at the wider opening on the other side, which leads directly into the market, and almost ran against the officers who were in search of him.

"Yield thee, thief," said the principal officer,

lowering his axe to the other's breast ; " I arrest thee in the name of the mayor and barons of the five ports. Deliver up your weapon."

"To whom, and for what?" said the youth, springing back, and unsheathing his sword like lightning. "I am not used to yielding, especially to such a thing as thou."

"Take him dead or alive," said the Sandwich functionary, preparing to rush in and pin the lad to the walls of the hospital.

The youth, however, seemed not at all inclined to become an easy prey : with wonderful strength and agility, considering his slight figure, he darted back a few paces, put aside the halbert of the officer with a most curious parry, and dealt that official such a tremendous blow upon his head-piece, that he brought him to his knees in a twinkling. Meanwhile, the other officer would have thrust in and captured him, but de Bossu at that moment dashed from the hospital, and interfered in the matter.

"Stand back, my masters all," he said ; "I forbid the arrest. This lad is in the King's service, and must go free."

"That must he not," said a third officer, at this moment adding himself to the party, "since I lay claim to his body on the part of the Abbot of Stonar, against whom his offence principally lies, seeing he has killed a citizen of that place."

"And I," said a tall monk, at that moment coming up, and who wore his cowl so closely drawn over his features that nothing but his sparkling eyes were to be seen ; " I must inform you that you are all mistaken in your search. I lay claim to the person of this would-be page, who is, indeed, neither more nor less than a female in disguise, and who is accused of sorcery and other heinous offences committed within the walls of my establishment at Salmstone. In the name of our holy mother church, I order all here to aid me in his capture."

"If she be a female," said the Sandwich officer, " she must indeed be a devil or a witch, for such a blow as just now felled me was never dealt by mortal female in this world before ; my skull-cap is well nigh cloven in twain. Man or woman, however, I cannot yield my claim ; she must to the jail incontinent, so here

goes. I arrest thee on the part of the Mayor of Sandwich."

"And I," said the other, "on the part of the Abbot of Stonar."

"And I lay claim to thee," said the monk, (beckoning to a party of the bow-men of Salmstone), as an escaped criminal from holy mother church, a sorceress, a witch, an enemy of mankind."

The whole party upon this made a rush towards the stripling, who (in spite of the dauntless manner in which he prepared himself to resist his numerous foes) must have become the capture of one or other of the claimants. But de Bossu, at the very moment of their rush, snatched him back as he stood before their opposing weapons, and bade him turn and fly through the passage he had but just passed, and make for the quay, where he would find those who would be ready to assist his escape.

The youth, therefore, quick as lightning turned, and darting through the passage, the opposing weapons of the different claimants clashed together as they rushed after him.

The monastery of the Carmelites in Sandwich was a large and stately building. Its chapel in particular ~~was~~ a magnificent structure. The Carmelite friars were mendicants by profession, depending upon casual charity for support. So much were the Carmelites esteemed for their superior sanctity and the strictness of their lives, that their chapel was much affected by the better sort of people in the town as a place of sepulture.

Indeed the fraternity of Carmelites in Sandwich at this period stood in great estimation amongst the inhabitants. Their superior, Nicholas Bundock was a monk of great sanctity. He had led a solitary life in Asia for many years, but had been promoted to this convent upon its first creation.

We have already said that Hubert de Burgh and several nobles had their present quarters in the monastery of the Carmelites at Sandwich. Its grey walls, accordingly, were now filled with retainers and men at arms, whilst even the secluded chapel which, since its erection had seldom seen aught besides the gaunt and skeleton figures and macerated features of the

holy brotherhood of its order, now rang to the warriors' strides, or echoed to the lightsome laugh of the knight and his gay esquire.

It was on the evening of this day, and after the transactions we have already described as having taken place in the town of Sandwich, that the Carmelite superior was visited by Father Eustatius, the superior of Salmstone Grange. Anything more dissimilar than this pair of churchmen it would perhaps be difficult to imagine. The Carmelite was (for the period in which he lived) a sincerely religious man, inasmuch as he pinched and macerated his body with bad food, thin drinks and scarcity, and wore out his life and constitution by continual penance and prayer. In short, he was strictly religious after his own fashion, knowing no touch of real feeling or charity towards his neighbours. A hard, stern, iron-hearted bigot, living between the white walls of his convent, as if the whole world around him was composed of incarnate fiends, amongs whom he was for his sins located, but with whom he was to hold as little converse as might be. To worship during the hours of sleep, bare

knee'd upon the cold flags of his chapel, amidst the smell of death, fainting for want of food and weariness, or to grind pease and pulse between his teeth in place of the wholesome and nutritious food of man, was in his notion to gain the steep and thorny path of heaven.

The superior of Salmstone whom we have already described, was an ambitious and unscrupulous monk, living for himself alone, believing nothing except what he could see, hear, touch, taste, or smell. A thriving churchman, of strong passions and unscrupulous conscience, to whom midnight masses were purgatory before his time, and pease and pulse poison to his blood.

Dismounting from his mule on the morning of the day whose events we have recorded, Eustatius had sought the cell-like parlour of the convent in which the Carmelite passed most of his secluded hours. "The peace of heaven descend upon our holy brother," he said on entering; "how fares it with the holy fraternity of Mount Carmel?"

"But ill, Eustatius," said the Carmelite, rising to receive his friend, "but ill; when a

legion of wicked fiends have possession of the holy walls of my dwelling-house. But ill, when riot, high living, and the smell of savoury soups and generous wines fill every crevice of an edifice dedicated to God and religion."

"'Tis like," returned the other, "this wicked reign will bring its own punishment anon. I come, brother, to be your guest for a brief space, perhaps but for a night, whilst I make search after a waif or stray from my convent walls. Besides which I crave an interview with Hubert de Burgh, in order to denounce the conduct of one of his followers in this war, who hath in my person insulted mother church."

"Thou wilt meet but small redress, good Eustatius," returned the Carmelite; "they are fiends all, and hate things pertaining to godliness and grace. Hubert de Burgh, by order of the King, hath sacked my house here of money and plate for present necessities of this war—nay, he hath levied contributions upon all and sundry, even taking from the chantries and other religious endowments of the town, the little he could filch and steal. Thou wilt get but small redress, be thy complaint

what it may," continued the monk ; " but stay, I hear the church bell tolling, and that reminds me there is a corpse to be entombed at this hour—the body of a youth, the son of the bailiff of Stonar, who was found murdered last night without the walls of that town. I must attend the burial."

" Be it so," said the superior of Salmstone. " At more leisure I would hold further converse with thee upon matters of deep import to holy mother church. Methinks, this reign portends but ill towards the clergy, and my intent, and that which I would fain confide to thine ear, must be talked of where there are neither walls to hear nor roof to shelter us. Enough: I leave thee for the present to pursue the search I have hinted at. Should I not succeed in it, I shall, perhaps, cross the seas with the expedition about to sail."

"Thou goest to Rome, brother," said the Carmelite, "is't not so?"

"Such is my ultimate purpose," said the other; "in the mean time peace and goodwill

attend thee. After curfew we will hold further counsel together. Farewell, brother."

"A resolved and zealous servant," said the Carmelite looking after the tall form of the monk Eustatius, as he glided from the apartment.

"Truly, the church in these evil days is somewhat wanting in zealous servants; what he would confide to me I partly guess; and in sooth, he hath a heart to conceive and hand to execute a summary vengeance against those who brave the anger of Rome."

So saying, the Carmelite arose from his seat and took his way into the chapel of the building.

In the cold grey chapel of the establishment, as the mellow tints of the setting sun streamed through the gothic windows upon the damp pavement, a monk was seen digging a grave. As he threw out the last shovel-ful of chalky soil, noisome from mingled bones returning to dust, the deep toll of the convent bell announced the approach of the tenant of the narrow dwelling.

We wish it were in our power to paint the solemnity of the monastic scene. The cold and grave-like chapel, its white flags only partially illumined by the many-tinted rays that streamed upon them from the narrow windows, upon which here and there was prostrated the dusky form of some skeleton-looking monk, half insane with misdirected devotion, and remorse for the ill-deeds of a former life of violence. Sauntering up and down too, and even some of them engaged in the deepest prayer, were to be seen the noble forms and martial figures of several warriors clad in complete steel—these constituted the picture.

In those days, the monasteries and abbeys throughout the land were frequently the temporary dwellings of the noble and the knightly. Houses of entertainment being scarce and hardly fit, except upon an emergency, for the retainers of the great. There was little, indeed, between the hut and the castle in the way of dwelling, and the monastery, consequently, was oftentimes the resort of the high-born and rich

profuse in their style of living as natives or friends who sought their cloister

Cold, sepulchral, and dim, however the chapel of the Carmelites ; and, sent forth its dull, heavy, monotonous half-whispered groan of a conscience sack-cloth-galled votary, now a startled the ear, amidst the measure the warriors, and their suppressed con

We know not if such be the feel dered in others by a contemplation of dral remains and monastic ruins days ; but, in such vicinity, we feel a scious of a state of previous existence of shadowy recollection seem to flit fancy, devotion to steal upon the as the bat flies his cloistered flight

familiar scene, together with the knightly form of the soldier of the cross, the vassal, the monk, and the man-at-arms of a by-gone age. We hear the solemn swell of voices during the midnight mass. The perfume of the censer pervades the aisle, banners of ancestral chivalry wave mournfully from the arched roof; and mitre, crosier, plumed helm, and blazoned shield, fill up the swelling scene.

At the period of which we treat, the ceremonies of the church were conducted with a pomp and circumstance of which, in later days, we have but a feeble idea; and, amidst a life of almost perpetual war, matters of religion were so deeply impressed upon the minds of men, that some part of the daily leisure of the knights and soldiers was passed in the society of the monk, or in acts of devotion.

As the deep tones of the bell of the monastery sounded, the solemn procession of death approached and darkened the arched entrance of the chapel, and the long train which followed the body denoted that the corpse was of some estate. Then came the ceremony and the requiem of the assembled monks.

Scarcely, however, had the obsequies of the deceased been completed, ere a tumult arose apparently in the street without. Footsteps were heard approaching, and a youth, closely pursued by several armed men, rushed into the chapel, darted through the assembled throng, and springing to the altar, shouted out the word "Sanctuary!"

The fugitive was the same person we have already seen escape from the fangs of the law on a former occasion, and having been again tracked by the pursuers who were in quest of him, he had actually been driven to earth, as it were, and forced to take sanctuary in the very chapel where the opponent he had slain was about to be consigned to the grave.

His baffled opponents drew off when they saw he had gained the altar, but they placed a strong guard without the chapel, so that eventually, as he would be driven by hunger from his refuge, it was little less than a certainty that he would be captured.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE ROYAL EMBARCATION.

Let it be a quarrel between us, if you list.

I embrace it.

How shall I know thee again?

Give me any gage of thine, and I will wear it in my
honest. Then, if ever thou darest acknowledge it, I will
make it a quarrel.

SHAKSPERE.

ON the grassy margin of the river Stour,
just without the walls of Sandwich, and
beside the principal vessels which were
lying moored opposite the house of the
Mayor, their masts glittering with pennons,
their cordage gorgeous with fluttering banners,
and the very sails, here and there unfurled,
displaying the crests and heraldic symbols of the
various nobles of the land, stood John of

England himself. Surrounded by his martial court and the chief officers of his army. He was giving audience amidst the knight throng, in the open air, to the several Cinque Port functionaries assembled.

The surrounding scene, even unpeopled by the actors then playing their parts upon its stage, was one of extreme beauty. On the Thanet side, the eye travelled over the Sandwich flats, at that period partially inundated by the washes, which a few years before flowed entirely over them, and which even then could only at intervals, be safely passed.

On the left, upon a small elevation, then also partially surrounded by the ooze of the salt deep, over which the heron flapped his wing, and the sea-bird screamed, stood the grey and massive walls and town of Richborough, the Rutupæ of the Romans, where the imperial eagle had been first planted when Cæsar's legions leapt ashore in Britain. On the right, and built upon the wild sea-beach, stood the Norman town of Stonar, whilst far away in the distance, amidst the dark and shadowy woods

rose the spires and towers of the splendid abbey of Minster.

The road, also, which at this period traversed the oozy and spongy marshes of the flats, presented a somewhat different aspect to what it now displays, when, perchance, a solitary van, drawn by a raw-boned horse, is almost the only object to be seen crawling along, far as the eye can reach.

It was now rendered picturesque by the figures traversing its unvarying extent: more than one dark mass of horsemen were to be observed, in close array, and full trot, towards the town; their lances glittering in the sun-beams, and their pennons fluttering in the wind. Carts and wains, too, laden with heavy baggage, came toiling onwards, and pilgrims, wayfarers, and camp-followers wended their way.

Meanwhile, as we have said, whilst the King was delayed by the tide which was to carry himself and followers out to sea, he held his court upon the river's bank.

John was the friend of the Cinque Ports, and during his reign confirmed all the free liberties

and customs which they had enjoyed under his predecessors; and the Cinque Port Barons, on the occasion, had sought to provide him with sufficiency of ships for his expedition. Unluckily, however, from some oversight or other it so happened that now, when he was upon the point of embarkation, it was discovered that there were no transports to convey the war engines he had brought with him from the tower, and the irritable monarch reproved the amphibious functionaries assembled before him in good set terms.

"Now, by Heaven's wrath!" he said, "we are deceived in these Barons. Bring hither Sir Hubert, the roll containing the list of men and vessels they are bound to furnish forth their charter, and by which suit and service they are discharged from military duties in the field."

"Our ports, my sovereign Liege—" interrupted the Mayor of Hastings.

"Silence, Sir knave," cried the King, "you are too forward here: we will be heard, but not answered. Our precedent Kings of Eng-

land have held you answerable for a proper complement of vessels, and, by our Lady's Grace ! you shall answer this."

"The Barons of the Cinque Ports, my Liege," charged the Mayor of Sandwich, "have exceeded in this instance the number of vessels by fifteen."

"Instance me no instances, sirrah," returned the fierce King. "What avail your instances to me, unless you can float those moving towers and engines standing yonder upon the grass, beside your muddy stream ? Read, Hubert, the number of vessels these Barons are bound to find, and, by my halidom, I swear if there be but deficiency of a single cock-boat, I'll make them perform duty with the army in the field, and allot them the brunt of the battle. Read to them, Hubert, and give them the form of their forty days' summons to begin with."

Upon this Hubert de Burgh, uncoiling a large roll of parchment, which he took from an attendant, and read with a loud voice the following :—

“Hubert de Burgh, Constable of Dover and Warden of the Cinque Ports, greeting,

“Whereas the Barons of the Cinque Ports owe us the following services when required, viz., that the said ports and their members upon forty days’ notice, fit out and supply the King with fifty-seven ships, each having a master and twenty men—”

“If your royalty will permit me to speak, I urged the mayor of Romney.”

“We will permit no man to speak,” exclaimed the angry King, “until the constable has pounded the law to us, as it is laid down.

“Each,” continued Hubert, “having a ship and twenty men well armed and arrayed at their own charge and proper cost for fifteen years, and at the expiration of that time, the said ships and men to be at our own proper charge and pay, so long as we shall need them. We will allow the master of each ship to have sixpence, the constable sixpence, and each man threepence a day, as by the term of the charter and customs granted by our predecessors, and which we have confirmed. We, hereby, order

armament to assemble at, or near Sandwich for our voyage to France, and summon the said barons to perform the said service, by sending such ships and mariners well arrayed.”*

“Now, Sirs,” said the King, “you hear our order given full forty days back, what say you to it? Our war-engines cumber your Haven-banks, whilst the troops that are to use them are already at sea.”

The Cinque Port functionaries were a good deal confounded by the ire of the King. They thought themselves in the right, and yet knew not exactly where the mistake, if any there was, had been made. The anger of the monarch was, in truth, a short madness, and always hurried him onward when once awakened. His policy generally led him to cultivate the good-will of his sailors, and that very morning he had granted considerable indulgence to the very men he was now about to blame unjustly.

Meanwhile, the royal wrath had so confounded the combarons of the port that, sturdy

* This was the actual order given to the Cinque Ports in the year 1393.

as they were, they seemed completely **chaf** fallen. They turned from one to the other, whilst they stood before the monarch, and **con-**sulted together, as we may sometimes see a body of city functionaries, when anything **goes** wrong before royalty in the present day.

At length, when the mayor of Sandwich **was** clearing his throat to address the King, Gondibert, the jester, stopped him.

"When you have nothing to say, brother," said the jester, "say nothing. A weak defence strengthens the adversary, and silence is **better** than a bad reply. Unless your mayorship **hath** a tongue ready to shoot forth words as a catapult sends bolts; or can build up excuses and lies as high as yonder moving tower, there, I'd have you keep silence; kings dislike hearing reason, especially when they are wroth."

"Hark ye, hither," said the King to Hubert de Burgh, "hand me the list of vessels these men are bound to find, in order that we may see which of the ports hath dared to attempt imposition; and do you, sir mayor of Sandwich, read it aloud, that your brothers in

council may answer for the vessels of each port."

The burly mayor stepped forward upon this order into the circle, and took the list which an esquire handed to him ; but to read it was quite another matter. He gazed at it with lack-lustre eye, looked wistfully at his combarons, then turned it upside down, then held it sideways, as he stroked the grey beard which descended a couple of inches over his mailed breast, and at length, twisting his moustache, as he uttered a deep sigh, he confessed he knew nought about the matter.

He was indifferently well skilled in sea port matters, and all that pertained to the Cinque Ports in particular, he said, but reading about them was quite out of his line.

"He was no clerk," he muttered, "but a sailor born, and had done Richard the First good service when he sailed with his great fleet on the expedition to the Holy Land. Richard was a sailor as well as a King," he continued, "and made laws as well as wars for the benefit of his

The very mention of Richard's name, contrasting it with his own, was a sure way to increase the anger of John, and accordingly the Sandwich mayor found himself again in the water.

"By St. Hildegarde of Kent!" cried the King, "we remember as much. By the same token, one of his maritime laws hath referred to such a defaulter as yourself. Namely, that any magistrate of his Cinque Ports, on conviction should have his head shaved, melted pitch poured upon it, and then covered with feathers, that he might be known as a knave." *

"You, sir, mayor of Hastings," continued the King, "how many vessels hath your port sent?"

"Six, my liege," said the chief magistrate of Hastings, a short, fat functionary, puffing under the weight of his harness and agitation. "Six."

* King Richard was the author of this law, among others, whilst at Chinon, in France, in 1189, for the government of his fleet in the expedition to the Holy Land. These laws are extremely curious.

my liege, being three more than were required on this occasion."

"Romney," said the King sharply.

"Six also, your highness," said the mayor of Romney, a huge, burly fellow with a beard like a coppice of brushwood; "Six also, being one more than was ordered."

"Dover," said the King.

"Thirty sail, my liege," said the mayor of Dover, "which includes those of Margate, Birchington, Ringwold, Folkstone, and Faversham."

"Sandwich," proceeded the King.

"Nine goodly vessels, may it satisfy your royal greatness," said the mayor of Sandwich, "besides which, Winchelsea, Seaforth, Pevensey, Bulverheath, Petit Ham, Hindley Grange, and Beaksbourne, have contributed thirteen extra vessels for your royal service on this occasion."

The King was for the moment silenced; he saw he had been unjust in his censure, and he turned his wrath to another quarter. "To you, Sir Gilbert Daundelyonne," he said (as his eye met the gaze of that knight whilst standing amongst the

assembled nobles on one side of the circle), "to you I sent an especial message by Walter Mauluc, regarding these engines, desiring that shipping might be seized by the Dover men, and brought round here for their transport."

"Such service was performed by me on receipt of your highness's packet to that effect," returned the Knight of Daundelyonne. "To Sir Hubert de Burgh I delivered the order, and the Mayor of Dover himself seized two merchant vessels, which I commissioned Lord Folkstone, my own esquire, to bring round."

"And which has not been performed," said the King.

"Your highness will pardon me," returned Sir Gilbert, proudly, "my household are not wont to disobey my orders. The Lord of Folkstone went on board one of the vessels, and himself brought them 'ere night-fall into yonder haven."

Sir Gilbert was not a man to bear undeserved reproof tamely. He was one of the few knights who dared to speak his mind to Majesty, whatever mood it chanced to wear.

"To your highness's own order regarding these vessels is this matter to be referred," he remarked, "and not to any omission of mine. The vessels destined for the war-engines have been appropriated to other uses. Part of your own followers have been removed from the royal vessel, in order to make room for some ladies of the court, whilst the Hospitallers have possession of the other craft."

"Then, by St. Paul!" said the King, "these Cinque Port barons must seize upon whatever vessels they can first catch in the channel, and transport the engines after us. 'Tis too late to alter matters now. Walter Mauluc, do thou see to this, for we are somewhat tired of this matter."

The council was now about to break up, and the King prepared to move on towards the royal vessel, when another incident for the moment arrested him. At the name of Mauluc, a sturdy-looking man-at-arms, who had been standing somewhat behind the Cinque Port functionaries, stepped into the circle, and without more ado, drawing back his huge arm, which

bore upon it the Cinque Port badge, half a half boat, dealt the esquire so heavy a buffet with his gauntleted fist, that the helmet of the Poicteon rang again. The esquire was standing so near the King when he received the blow, that the monarch recoiled for a moment, and laid his hand upon his sword, whilst half a dozen of the surrounding nobles in an instant springing upon the stranger, were about to slaughter him while he stood. The King, however, after a glance at the offender, called to them to stand from about him, whilst the esquire, furious with rage, had also drawn his weapon to cut him down.

"We know something of this," said John laughing; "stand back, my masters all, I stand, fellow, do thou step forth. Knowest thou the penalty of dealing a blow so near our person? Thy right hand stands forfeit."

"A Cinque Port burgess never forfeits his word," returned the sturdy mariner. "If the forfeit due, it must be paid; better your highness lost a stout limb, ever willing to do good service than Pierce Corbeht forfeit his word, though given to a cowardly knave."

"My liege, I crave leave to be myself the punisher of this affront," said Mauluc, burning with ire: "the villain shall die upon my weapon's point."

"I ask no other," said the Cinque Porter, "always providing thou canst perform thy boast. If not, so shall I be sure to save a limb and chastise a knave."

"Not so," said John; "we permit not our household to be mixed up in such brawls. Thou art a sturdy fellow," he continued, addressing the man, "and we offer thee service amongst our own guard."

"Gramercy," said the fellow; "I accept the same, since I suppose it's the only way I can redeem my right hand. Your follower yonder will hold me at least a man of my word, since I promised to smite him, even if I found him in your royal presence."

"Out, dunghill," exclaimed Mauluc, contemptuously; "I hold no conversation with thee."

"Is not thy name Mauluc?" said the other—
"Walter Mauluc?"

"It is," returned the esquire; "what hast thou to do with the name of a gentleman?"

"'Tis easier to bear a gentleman's name said the Cinque Porter, "than to earn on. Many a knave I know bears a goodly title, who the hangman's cord would better grace. If it was not thyself who gave the name of Walt Mauluc last night at the Fisher's Gate, a great knave borrowed such title for the nonce. Would I might light upon the thief."

"No more of this," said the King, aside to Mauluc; "thou must be content, sir esquire, to bear the blow, which, of right, belonged to our own face."

CHAPTER XV.

A HOSTILE FLEET IN OLDEN TIMES.

Suppose that you have seen
The well-appointed king
Embark his royalty ; and his brave fleet
With silken streamers the young Phœbus fanning.
Play with your fancies, and in them behold
Upon the hempen tackle, ship-boys climbing ;
Hear the shrill whistle, which doth order give
To sounds confused ; behold the threaden sails
Borne with the invisible and creeping wind,
Draw the huge bottoms through the furrow'd sea.

SHAKSPERE.

A FEW hours from the date of the transactions we have described, and of the many thousands of troops, and choice-drawn cavaliers who had thronged the town of Sandwich, only a few hundred remained, and these merely tarried for lack of ships to waft them across the channel.

The well-appointed King had "embarked his royalty," and his brave fleet having been detained by the adverse winds which had also detained the French ambassador on our shores, no ships were seen with their "threaden sails," and were borne back to France,

A city on the inconstant billows dancing.

To those who have beheld the embarkation of an army in modern times, the sight of the English power shipped in the huge vessels which constituted the vessels of war in that period — their curious and unwieldy rigging, their style of rigging, their gorgeous silken streamers, and innumerable banners and flags, together with the awkward and ungainly manner in which they seemed to creep along the sea, would have perhaps caused a singularly cumbrous and awkward warship to "turn out."

The moon shone forth brightly as the tide set in motion the different vessels lay before the town, the royal barge almost the last which was towed out

This vessel, which bore the King and his immediate attendants, together with the Earls of Salisbury, Pembroke, Norfolk, and Essex, would in itself have caused some little curiosity to a sailor of modern times. Its sails bore the arms of England, gaudily emblazoned, and the huge hull standing high out of the water, looked still more unwieldy from the lofty turretted castles built up upon its prow and stern, whilst every part of its sides seemed so filled with the bright arms of the knights and retainers on board, that it appeared a wonder the sailors could work their craft.

Far as the eye could reach, along the tortuous course of the haven, as it flowed out to the main of waters, in the clear moonlight, were to be seen the gorgeous vessels slowly and majestically creeping out to sea, whilst the deep wailing cry of the sailors and men-at-arms, as they towed the different craft along the stream, occasionally intermingled with a wild flourish of martial music added to the interest of the scene.

In the poop of the royal vessel, holding converse with the Earl of Salisbury and others about the King and his court, a glittering throng, while the wind, the deck, and every part of the ship seemed filled and bristling with weapons and eager warriors.

According to the orders of the monarch, many of the nobles who were to have sailed in the royal barge had been ordered into other vessels, the better to accommodate the knight of Darnleytown, the Lady Bertha, and several of her train. The monarch, indeed, was now pleased to give a considerable share of his time and attention to the proud beauty, as the vessel slowly and majestically glided past the gates of the town, whose walls and towers, silvered by the moon, were crowded at this part with the townsfolk. The Cinque Port functionaries standing bare-headed, lowering their weapons as the royal vessel sailed by. Then came the deafening shout from the citizens, answered from vessel to vessel far away in the distance, and re-echoed again in the old town of Stonar;—the

exulting shout of brave English hearts, ever ready for daring deeds when the note of preparation sounds upon the blast.

At this period of John's reign, many of the bold barons who formed his court, and fought his battles, yet retained for their King the loyalty and devotion due to the crown. The utter depravity and remorseless cruelty of his disposition had not, as yet, fully developed themselves. Deeds of horror, sufficient even to startle the iron nerves of the fierce Norman noble, whose whole life was a scene of oppression towards the conquered race of condemned English, were yet to be performed by this "vice of Kings."

Their indignation required to be aroused by a succession of atrocities, crowned and completed by a savage and unnatural murder, which startled the whole Christian world, and blotting John's name from the hearts of the knightly and noble of the kingdom, made him an object of the blackest hatred to mankind.

. As the vessel slowly dropped down the tide towards the open sea, the monarch ever and anon holding converse with those around him,

bestowed his more lightsome discourse upon Bertha Daundelyonne, whose exceeding beauty had, for the moment, apparently made considerable impression upon him.

That lady, also, whom the adventure of the previous night might have sufficiently taught the danger of too great an intimacy with unscrupulous greatness, felt herself duly elated by attentions of royalty; so much so, that she forgot the insult which had been so recently offered to her, in consideration of the exalted rank of him who condescended to whisper adulation in her ear.

In those days the might and majesty of the King shone out with a force and splendour totally unknown. The sceptre carried with it the awe and dread consequent upon unlimited power, whilst the person of the wielder was hedged with a divinity in the eye of the beholder that in our own levelling times would be derided.

As the Lady Bertha looked around upon the assemblage, who, high as they were in rank, stood aloof from the

jesty of England, and beheld herself alone admitted to a familiar intercourse; as she glanced around, and beheld those gallant forms of England's chivalry clasped in mail, their fine features displayed through the open visors of their helmets, and their eyes bent with looks of admiration upon her own surpassing form; who can wonder if her heart beat high with pride, and that she indulged in an intoxicating dream of future greatness, which for the moment almost unsettled her reason?

The besetting sin of Bertha Daundelyonne was pride: she could never for a moment forget that on the maternal side she fetched her life and being from a Saxon prince; but she forgot, as she listened to the honied sentences of the Norman, that she listened to one of the bitter enemies of her mother's race: she forgot the persecution her own ancestors had suffered at the hands of the conquerors; a persecution and degradation which placed them on a level with the children of Ammon, who were ground under saws and axes, and harrows of iron.

To Walter Mauluc, who was in attendance

upon John, though at this period he had not attained to so much favour as to venture to approach the royal person upon all occasions, and who, consequently, remained in the back ground, the familiar discourse between Bertha Daundelyonne and the monarch was gall and wormwood. The esquire possessed a mounting spirit; he was just the sort of person to rise in the times in which he lived. A fellow by the hand of nature marked and signed to be the ready slave of an unscrupulous King. But he also possessed some touches of pride. He loved the haughty Bertha with a deep and absorbing passion, and he wished to achieve her at the same time that he achieved greatness. The esquire of Poitou would have been willing to wade to power and fortune through rivers of blood, but he recoiled at the idea of her he loved becoming the favourite even of a crowned King. He must receive the Lady Bertha pure and unspotted, or he had rather steer his course across the ocean of adventurous deeds alone.

The King's female wards at this period could not marry any person, however agreeable to

themselves and their relations, without the royal consent. A cruel and ignominious servitude, under which heiresses of the noblest families and most opulent fortunes were exposed to sale, or obliged to purchase the liberty of disposing of themselves in marriage by great sums of money either to the King, or to some greedy courtier, to whom he had granted or sold their marriage—no less a sum than ten thousand marks, equivalent to one hundred thousand pounds of our present coin having been paid for the wardship and marriage of a single heiress. This cruel servitude was afterwards extended to male heirs.

Between Gondibert, the jester of Daundelyonne, and Walter Mauluc, there had sprung up, even from the beginning of their acquaintance, a deadly animosity. The jester was a man of great penetration. Whatever had been his reason for taking upon himself the trade of a fool—for no man knew his history previous to his introduction into the knight's service some few years before the commencement of our story—there was an immensity of shrewd-

ness and wisdom concealed beneath the cock's comb it was his pleasure to wear ; and he uttered his harsh truths in any presence, regardless of favour or fear ; at the same time it was worth of observation, that he bore a heart of the greatest humanity towards the unfortunate. In fact, the jester of Daundelyonne was a man of a common mind ; he was one who had seen much of the world and of mankind, and was, for the time in which he lived, an extraordinary person.

During the passage of the royal barque down the river, Gondibert having been admitted amongst Sir Gilbert's train, stalked about the vessel for some time, amusing himself with marking all that was going on, and regarding the efforts of the sailors to haul the heavy floating castle along from either bank. At length, with the licence his profession allowed him, he thrust himself into the royal circle, and as his eye caught the present disposition of affairs, he intruded his conversation upon the party.

"Of all passions, brother," he said to Mau-

whom he saw with finger on lip watching the object of his regard, "of all passions jealousy exacts the hardest service. Nay, start not, sir esquire, I am no subject for your poniard. My wits ooze out unconsciously without tapping. Jealousy, I say, pays the bitterest wages."

"Go to, Sir knave," said Mauluc, who saw that the observation had been overheard by Hugo Daundelyonne, and who, accordingly put the best face upon it. "What service does jealousy exact?"

"Marry, Sir esquire," said the jester, "cannot you tell that from the great mass of your experience? Why, Sir, its service is to watch the success of the enemy."

The esquire again started, and looked towards the King, who was at that moment leaning forward to whisper something into the ear of the fair Bertha, as he took her hand:—

"And its wages, Sir fool," he said, "are?"

"To be sure of it," returned the jester, as he glided from his side, and approached the King.

All lovers—even a royal one, may, as spere says, be “gravelled for lack of m John seemed to have arrived at some su tremity, for the Lady Bertha, as she stood him, seemed from her manner as if she heard something she could not altogether prehend. The King, too, appeared glad diversion in his favour, and he hailed the proach of the jester as a favourable inter Jesters, indeed, were all licenced :

.

“ They had liberty,
Withal, as large a charter as the wind,
To blow on whom they pleased.”

Gondibert, therefore, elbowed his way th the press, and with the greatest effr passed the King without speech or gest deference, upon which the monarch calle back.

“ The whip might teach you manners said ; “ whose fool art thou ?”

“ Truly,” said Gondibert, “ I am but a highness, a sort of public functionary att

to no one in particular, but yet serving for the nonce, too. I creep me in here amongst the Daundelyonne. I would fain follow these wars, for I hate the French as cordially as the French hate us on this side the herring pond. Methinks I could like to trounce a frog hugely, for the frogs are a bloated and arrogant race."

"Gramercy," said the King, "thou art a right valiant fool, the first I ever knew fond of fighting; and thou hatest the French, eh? a goodly recruit."

"Truly, cousin John," said the jester, "I despise the French because the French cannot despise us, although they hate us as cordially as we hate them. We have the honour of their hate, only because they cannot despise us."

"This fellow shows wisdom in his folly," said the King to the Lady Bertha.

"Your highness will find him a shrewd knave," said the lady.

"You know him, then?" enquired the King.

"He lightens our hall with his jests," said the lady, "when it is his pleasure to sojourn

at Daundelyonne. He is a great favourite of my father's—more his companion and adviser at times, than his jester."

"Levity," said the jester, who had carelessly leant over the side of the vessel during this conversation, "is often less foolish, and gravity less wise than each of them appears, daughter."

"We are pleased, at all events," said the King, "at having the approval of so sapient a councillor as yourself, sir jester, in our quarrel with France. Doubtless, the war will thrive when your wisdom sanctions it"

"I said not so much as that, cousin John," returned the jester; "in all quarrels, it has been truly said, there are sure to be faults on both sides. A quarrel, like a spark, frequently cannot be produced without blows. War is a game, cousin, in which princes seldom win—their subjects never. If all these gallant gentlemen I see around us here, but knew how little they really add to their comfort and reputation by the display they are making for a

brief hour under the blessed sun of heaven, they would go home to their wives and look after their estates and servitors."

"Gramercy," said the King, laughing, "you are a philosopher as well as a fool, I see."

As the King thus diverted himself in converse with those around, the "deep drawing barques," got fairly out to sea, and gradually the white-faced shores of England seemed to dissolve in distance, as those of France became each instant more distinct.

CHAPTER XVI.

A CINQUE PORT PUNISHMENT.

A creature unprepared, unmeet for death.

After him, fellows, drag him to the block.

SHAKSPERE.

NEAR the marshes beyond the Canterbury gate at Sandwich, two rivulets meandered in former times, called the south and north streams. Through one of these streams the sea once flowed ; and although its waters are now considerably diminished, it still bears the name by which it was designated in former ages—a name terrible in the ears of the evil-doer and the criminal.

It was the famous water of Guestling, in which felons were punished by drowning, their bodies being carried by the current which flowed through the marshes of Lydden Valley into the main of waters.

On the morning subsequent to the day on which John had sailed from Sandwich, and whilst the remnant of his power still remained in the town, a small party of the Cinque Port guard were seen passing from the court-house, in charge of a couple of prisoners about to be executed in the waters of the Guestling. They passed through the gate-house, and making a half turn to the right, stood next minute upon the margin of the fatal waters of this ominous-looking ditch.

The mode of punishment, to which we have referred, was a Cinque Port privilege, and was a horrible mode of executing vengeance or justice; the criminal being disposed of exactly after the same fashion that a mangy cur is now sometimes put to death.

The two persons about to be executed on the

found guilty of the off
charge, and as both also
without friends in the p
doomed, and were brougl
place of trial, to be sous
stream.

“Will any one do me
love of heaven, and in
sinner?” said the elder of
coarse looking ruffian, w
horror at the sight of the
brought beside.

“To the fiend with you
grisly looking executioner
strong cord to a heavy mas
several similar weights was

that I may place this jewel beneath your ear. See there, how patiently your companion waits his turn."

The executioner pointed, as he spoke, to the other criminal, who, standing with arms folded, figure erect, and head thrown back, seemed to hold himself above exchanging a word with the ruffians about to launch him next minute into eternity.

It was the youth whom we have already noticed in this story, the same who had intruded himself into the duel before the walls of Stonar, and whom we have also seen take sanctuary in the monastery of the Carmelites, from whence he had been ultimately captured, after the departure of the troops from the town.

"See how coolly that good youth awaits his fate," said the executioner, as he uncoiled his rope, and prepared to lay hands upon the elder prisoner.

"'Tis of him I would speak," said the man ;
" I pray you, send for some priest to confess me ;
I cannot die thus like a dog, with all my sins upon my head."

“Bind and gag him, men,” said the executioner impatiently to his assistants; “you should have thought of that before,” he continued to the criminal. “Come, prepare, sirrah; we can’t stand here all day drowning one man in the Guestling. There’s plenty of work on hand since the army lay in our town. Body o’ me! there’s three fellows to be whipped at Hogg’s Corner; there’s Ralph Spigernel to have his ear slit off and nailed to a cart wheel with a four-penny nail, in the butchery. There’s dame Illwill to be carried round the ramparts, up Cokel lane, through the fish-market, and then round the cross in the corn-market to pillory gate; there to be burnt in the cheek, and banished the town for lying and slander. There’s Piere Barre, the blacksmith, to be beheaded under the gallows without Sandown gate, for high treason, in speaking ill of the King, and saying Prince Arthur was rightful heir to the crown. There’s Maud Mutch to be burnt in the castle field for bewitching the mayor’s pigs. There’s two young women to be publicly whipped for theft from the archers of the

King's guard; and there's Madge Johnson, Maria Waldiard, Ann Margery, and Dennis Cardwell, besides two others, to be banished for a year and a day, and marked with a hot iron in the cheek."

The Cinque Port functionary would have doubtless enumerated many more equally agreeable duties he had to perform, for his office seemed quite to his taste, and its execution a labour of love. But he found himself necessitated to stop from sheer want of breath, whilst the elder prisoner, with a face of horror, looked around in every direction, as the assistants pinioned his arms preparatory to casting him into the stream. Whilst he was yet doing so, a knight completely armed, accompanied by his esquire, rode up to the spot, and pulling up his steed before the group, lowered his plumed head and gazed for a moment at the party.

"I pray you, sir knight, for heaven's love," said the criminal, "interest yourself to save me from this horrid fate. Believe me, I am innocent of any crime. Undo my bonds, good Sir, and I have much to tell you—state secrets, matters

of great weight. Nay, believe me, sir knight, the fate of those in rank as exalted as thine own, are bound up in my existence."

"Who and what is he?" inquired the knight, "and what is his crime?"

"Nay, I know but little of the matter, Sir Walter de Wingham," returned the executioner, "save that I have a secret warrant for his execution. Last night, I believe, he struck at the life of some one high in authority and about the person of the King, and he must die the death—"

"I beseech ye," said the culprit, springing forward and extricating himself from the hands of the men who held him, at the same time throwing himself upon the ground, and clasping the feet of the knight's horse. "I beseech ye, noble Sir, stay the execution."

The knight reined back his horse and raised his lance.

"Leave your grasp upon my horse's knee, hound," he said, "lest I strike and save the hangman labour. What communication has he to make?" he inquired of the executioner.

"Pshaw," returned the functionary; "'tis simply a device to gain a few minutes more, ere the waters hide his body from the open world. Come, sirrah, take your bath with a good grace, and save these gentlemen the trouble of forcing you to swallow the draught."

"Let me purchase but a short hour of life," persisted the man, "only one short hour, sir knight. For the sake of yonder youth, who is too noble to beg his life—hear me."

"The Cinque Port laws are stern and unalterable," said Sir Walter; "who is the youth you speak of?"

The knight turned his steed as he spoke and approached the other prisoner. He seemed surprised at his figure and bearing, and immediately determined to interest himself in his favour.

"How comes it, sir troubadour," he said on observing in the habiliments of the youth tokens of a professor of the joyous science, "how comes it that I find you in such a situation, and thus consorted?"

"For my situation," said the youth, "it is the

result of falling into the hands of the false and civilized sailors of yonder town."

"And wherefore condemned to this ignominious death?" inquired the knight.

"I slew the son of one of their magnates in the neighbouring port of Stonar," returned the other.

"In fair fight?" inquired de Wingham.

"In fair and open conflict," replied the youth. "I am incapable of the foul crime of murder they have charged me with."

"Wilt take service with me?" said de Wingham, "I am bound for France."

"Willingly," said the youth.

"Then, by heaven thou shalt not die the death of a common stabber," said the knight. "Here, Guichard," he continued, beckoning his esquire, "dismount and unpinion his arms. Now, good youth, strike a blow for your own freedom, and make for yonder town, whilst I keep these hang-dogs in check."

The esquire upon this dismounted, and cut the cords which bound the youth's hands with his dagger, whilst the knight, opposing himself

to the executioner and his assistants, kept them **from** recapturing him.

During the confusion which this interference **cre**ated, a female who had been crouching down **and** was wailing beside the stream, suddenly **jumped** up, and severed the cords which **bound** the limbs of the ruffian who had been **pleading** so strenuously for life a few minutes **before**. The action having been unobserved **whilst** the Sandwich functionaries were engaged in an angry expostulation with the knight, both prisoners managed to escape.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE STRICKEN FIELD.

Now John, your King, and England's, doth approach,
 Commander of this hot malicious day;
 And like a polly troop of huntsmen, come
 Our lusty English: all with purpled hands,
 Dyed in the lying slaughter of their foes.
 Open your gates, and give the victors way.

SHAKSPERE.

WE must now follow the English monarch in his swift passage towards France, and also give a brief summary of the events which immediately followed the declaration of war on his landing in that country.

A feeble government, eluded laws, and a violent and tyrannical prince, had given many of John's Norman subjects considerable disgust. They had before complained of the denial

justice in his court, and accordingly many of them now secretly leaned to the party of Philip, and solicited redress from him as their superior lord.

Arthur of Bretagne, although he has been familiarized to our eyes by Shakespere, as a mere child, possessing all the winning eloquence of a prattler of some nine or ten years of age, and whose very pleading for life and eyesight has all the infantine shrewdness of the nursery, was, in truth, at this period rising to man's estate.

Nature and fortune had indeed joined to make him great.

"Of nature's gifts he might with lilies boast,"

and to a form of perfection was added a disposition sweet as summer.

The mind of the young Duke had been early impressed by many of the nobles around him with the dangerous character of his uncle John—nay, from infancy he had been taught to fear him. The very name of the English King, whispered in the gloaming and in the gloomy chambers of his castle-home, whilst nursed to

slumber under his mother's eye, would cause a shudder and a start. It was a name of ill-omen to his ear, boding the evil which it seemed his destiny to suffer at his cruel kinsman's hands.

The young Duke, thus early made sensible of his unnatural uncle's disposition, had already sought security by a union with Philip, and was at this period with the army, which had commenced hostilities against the King of England.

Philip had knighted him with his own hand, and invested him with the counties of Anjou and Maine, which had been previously resigned to the English monarch.

Ere, therefore, the thunder of the war (as it rolled onward with John) burst upon the ears of this "unhair'd soldier," with the assistance of Philip he had besieged and taken Teliars and Boutevant, and, following up these successes, advanced upon and captured Mortmain and Lyons, after a feeble resistance.

The progress of their army was, indeed, for a short time as rapid as they could wish, and the French King, vowing he would never cease hostilities till John was satisfied to remain content

with his English dominions alone, advanced next upon Gournai, which he invested, and, opening the sluices of the lake, which lay close to the place, poured such a torrent into the town, that the garrison were glad to escape, thus winning it without striking a single blow. Arthur, in the meantime, at the head of a small army, and intoxicated with military ardour, suddenly breaking into Poitou, marched upon Mirabeau, where Queen Elinor had just arrived, and immediately laid siege to that place.

The Queen-mother, who was lodged in the town with a very small garrison, the fortifications being also in a ruinous state, was on the point of being captured by the chivalrous youth, when John with his power suddenly, like some unexpected tempest, burst upon his camp, and dispersed his hopes on the winds.

Although we have not thought it necessary, after seeing the English King embark his royalty, to follow his power step by step, we shall take leave to introduce our readers to the scene at this moment enacting near Mirabeau.

John, who could even on occasions of imminent peril to his life and kingdom, display an indolence and inactivity, which rendered him contemptible to all around, had, in this pursuit, if we may so call it—exhibited an extraordinary degree of rapidity in his movements. He seemed burnt up with inflaming wrath, and, advancing by forced marches, fell so suddenly upon Arthur and his little army, that, after a short but severe engagement, he completely routed them almost with the advance-guard of his power. The Count de la Marche and Geoffrey de Lusignan, together with several Barons, who had revolted from John, succeeded, however, in rallying a strong body of French knights, and made so desperate a stand around the heroic Arthur, that they nearly succeeded in effecting his escape.

Geoffrey de Lusignan, meanwhile, ere he was aware of the proximity of the vindictive John, had beaten down a portion of the walls of Mirabeau, and entered the place at the head of his chivalry; for many hours maintained his ground in expectation of support, and had even driven the fierce Elinor to the

utmost extremity. At this moment, John, bending all his energies towards the capture of Arthur, furiously assailed a part of the Prince's camp, where De la Marche was making a stand ; so that the grandson and grandmother were being nearly captured at the same time. The latter event, however, was prevented by a small party of English knights, who, under command of a man of gigantic stature, made a sudden dash for the town, spurred furiously across the breach, pierced their way to where the Queen was waging an unequal conflict with her foes, and succeeded in bringing her off in safety, capturing Geoffrey de Lusignan at the same moment.

The engagement, indeed, as was not uncommon at that period, was divided into at least half a dozen separate encounters, in which the several leaders of renown seemed fighting on their own private account, and the whole battle might be said to sway to and fro like a troubled sea, with a sound, in the absence of all noise of cannon and musketry, as of many thousand smiths at work upon their anvils.

Meantime, whilst John with savage fury, and surrounded by his knights, penetrated to the spot where the young Prince was endeavouring to make a stand, an alarm was raised that the Queen was either killed or taken prisoner ; or which the monarch bore back and disengaged himself from the press.

“ Who has seen Sir Richard Faulconbridge ?” he asked, as he reined in his steed.

“ But now he was here,” said the Earl of Salisbury ; “ I saw him raging like a tiger by your highness’s side.”

“ Do you behold him still ?” said John, “ in the press yonder ?”

“ I see him not,” returned the Earl.

“ Then is he dead !” groaned John ; “ a heavy loss at such a moment. We came on with too small a force. See, our people give way here. Our mother is assailed too, and I fear, taken. Sir Gilbert Daundelyonne,” he continued “ thou hast fought beside our brother in Palestine ; make into the town yonder, and learn, if thou canst, how it fares with the Queen.”

“ The Bastard !” shouted a dozen voices at

that moment. "See, he comes towards us from the town."

"Art sure 'tis he?" said the King, as he turned his steed and bore back from the increasing confusion now taking place amongst his own followers.

"Methinks, I should know that steed amongst a million," said Salisbury; "and, except your royal brother, there was never seen in my time any one to match the rider."

"That page of thine is thinly clad for such a scene as this, Lord Folkstone," remarked John, as his eye caught a glimpse of our old acquaintance, the page of Daundelyonne; "but his horse looks fresh and swift. Bid him ride and meet Sir Richard; and tell him to turn and aid the Queen, if not too late. Lord Salisbury, gallop back, and bid Hubert hasten on with the remainder of our power, lest we be taken in our own trap here. Retire, gentlemen," he continued, "we will remove a short distance from this ground. The day grows wondrous hot here."

"That youth will hardly make good his message," said Salisbury. "See, he is intercepted

by a large body of the enemy. But no," he continued, "the lad has evaded them and presses forwards. Ha, by heaven! they follow; their lances are down; they make for Faulconbridge's small party, and will bear him hard. De Ferrers, do thou remain here beside the King;—Lord Folkstone, to the rescue." So saying the Earl of Salisbury raised his arm, and shaking his ponderous lance, glanced around to his followers, and departed like a thunderbolt towards the spot where Faulconbridge had already closed with his enemies.

Lord Folkstone, likewise, putting spurs to his horse, galloped furiously in the direction he had seen taken by the page; whilst the adverse parties encountered with a shock that sounded above the din, every where around

"The poor boy," he said, "has ridden with breast unarmed through the thick of the battle by my side, and now, I fear me, he has fallen in yonder dreadful scene of strife. I had rather lose my right hand than that page should suffer harm."

As the young Lord neared the combatants,

he beheld a lady mounted in the midst of the Bastard's party, which was now completely hemmed in, and almost overwhelmed by their numerous foes. The Bastard, himself, who was conspicuous amongst the *mêlée* from his great height, alone seemed to maintain a stand against the rushing tide which poured upon him. His lance had been shivered up to the grasp; his ponderous sword was also broken, and with a heavy mace, which he had caught up from his saddle-bow—he now apparently with as much ease, as if he had been merely exercising his arm for sport—dashed out the brains of horse and rider as he struck; whilst ever as he cleared a passage for himself, he bounded back to the side of the lady, whose bridle-rein it seemed his especial duty to guard. The fierce Elinor, for she it was who was by the side of Faulconbridge in the midst of this scene of strife, sitting erect and dauntless upon the horse on which she had been placed when her kinsman rescued her in the town, quailed not at the raining blows which fell around; but in her ermined robe, she scowled with the fierce

hate and disdain of some enchained fury upon the French knights who were aiming at her capture or death.

“Ha!” she exclaimed, as Faulconbridge, dashed in the casque of the Count de Samb-lancay, and sent him headlong from his saddle, “there struck Richard’s arm! Brave coz,” she added, as another knight fell before his hurling mace, “the spirit of Plantagenet was in that blow.”

The timely succour of the Earl of Pembroke and Lord Folkstone, had enabled the brave son of Cœur de Lion to strike himself somewhat clear of the multitude hanging upon his diminished party. The last blow he struck ridded him of the powerful Count de Chartres, and his ponderous mace was broken, as it buried itself through crest and helm in the brain of that puissant knight. He then grasped a second opponent by the throat with one hand, whilst he bore the Queen’s horse clear with the other, and, galloping with her to the rear, again turned, and desecrating the royal banner in the distance, made towards it.

The powerful steed which Faulconbridge rode, and which barded from counter to tail under the torment of spur and curb in the strong grasp of its powerful rider, had plunged, bounded, and reared aloft, whilst he dealt his blows, now reeled and struggled as the knight spurred him once more towards the scene of blood. It seemed as though the gallant brute but held his strength, till he could bear his rider to the King, for, as he reached the spot on which John stood (surrounded by several of his knights) he fell clattering headlong on the green turf. His mighty heart was broke, and he fell, absolutely spurred and goaded to death.

The knight was somewhat shaken by the fall, but he disengaged himself from the dying steed, and leaping to his feet stood weaponless before the King. His crest was shorn from his helm, his armour hacked and broken, and every part of the harness upon his athletic limbs and body showing tokens of the strife he had passed through since the battle had commenced.

"What tidings, Sir Richard?" inquired the monarch. "Our mother, has she fallen into the hands of yonder party?"

"Her highness is in safety, my Liege," returned Fairbairnbridge. "I rescued her but now she is placed under strong guard. The banner of Robert is in sight waving over yonder hill. Prince Arthur too is taken. One more charge, and we drive these Frenchmen to the walls, for the main body is in the field."

He said John, his dark countenance flushing a deep red, and his eye scowling as he fixed his vision. "Is Arthur taken! Draw your puissance together, cousin," he continued. Fairbairnbridge leaped upon the steed offered him by an esquire, "and advance upon them whilst we attend to the security and safety of our prize."

"St. George for England!" shouted the Bastard, as he vanished with the speed of thought towards the conflict.

The shadows of evening were descending upon the field of battle without the walls of Mirabeau as the faint and wailing blast of distant trumpet sounded upon the breeze and swept over its fern-clad undulations.

The din of the conflict had given place to the stillness of eventide. It was as if some horrible tempest, which tears up the mountain pine by the roots, and topples down "huge towers and moss-grown steeples," had suddenly worn out its fury, and, satisfied with the ravages it had created, had sunk down to rest exhausted.

The dreary whisper of the evening wind was only disturbed by the faint and failing blast of the horns of the English leaders, who, remaining masters of the field, sounded out a few wild notes, to recal the stragglers to their sides.

The battle had been fought, the day was "lost and won." Of the gallant little army of Prince Arthur, whose friends on that morning had drawn their swords high in hope and pride, not one remained upon the field but the dead, the dying, and the vanquished.

The Prince himself was a captive, together with several of his leaders, and the remainder of his force scattered, destroyed, and discomfited; whilst John, elated with success, with the Queen-

mother and many of the nobles of his kept wassail that evening in the castle of beau, the kettle-drum and trumpet braying

“The triumph of his pledge.”

It was on a small open space where the grass bent to the wind, and which was quivered by the prickly gorse and fern, and growing around, that several steeds and men had been overthrown, and were lying objects upon the field. The number and proximity of the slain, and the devices of their battered shields and torn surcoats, that the struggle upon this spot had been fierce, and that some of the most valuable of France had there been shed like water.

Amidst this “carrion death” there was but one who had apparently escaped unharmed and this was a youthful page, who, beside the prostrate form of a wounded knight, sought to unclasp the lacings of the surcoat he wore, in order to staunch the blood.

flowed so plentifully as completely to have saturated the garments worn beneath his chain-mail.

It was indeed evident to the page, that unless he could quickly succeed in rendering essential assistance to the young Lord of Folkstone, who had been pierced by a lance in the throat, and to all appearance was mortally hurt, the young knight must bleed to death in a short time.

The small and taper fingers of the page seemed quite unequal to the task of unclasping the fastenings of the helmet, and he appeared almost wild with despair, as he started up and looked around in the hope of assistance. Suddenly, however, he bethought him of his dagger, and quickly unsheathing it, he forced back the iron hooks by which the helm was clasped.

The young knight opened his eyes as the stifling casque was removed, and the cool blast visited his cheek. He seemed to recognise the youth who sought to aid him; but as the gushing tide flowed from his wound, his remains of life appeared ebbing fast away, and he

rolled heavily from the supporting arms of the boy upon the ground.

'Twas a ghastly sight for one so young. A dying friend amidst a heap of slain. But the page appeared to be one who had profited by the uses of adversity. He glanced around, and then taking off the hood he wore, he cut off a portion of the luxuriant hair which fell upon his shoulders, and with the scarf bound it upon the gaping wound. He then drew a small flask from the gypsum at his side, and applying it to the lips of the fainting knight, drew his body up against the carcase of a slain horse, and placing him in a sitting posture, quietly waited beside him, in hopes that succour would arrive ere darkness descended.

Meanwhile, somewhat removed from the spot where the brunt of the battle had taken place, might be seen a small body of the combatants still upon the ground on which they had fought. They were a portion of the English power; but they looked more like men who had been beaten, than of the party of the conqueror. Discontent and sorrow were in their

looks. The very notes of their trumpets, as they floated upon the blast, sounded a wailing lament. They spoke to each other in under tones, as if they regretted now the fight was won, that their hands and weapons had helped to strike in the cause. That day boded ill-fortune to England. Arthur of Bretagne was taken and a prisoner in the hands of John. Meanwhile the sun had set fiery red upon the stricken field, gilding with its rays the ghastly picture it presented, and as darkness closed around the horsemen rode slowly into Mirabeau.

END OF VOL. I.

LONDON:

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JOHN OF ENGLAND.

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

BY HENRY CURLING,

AUTHOR OF

“THE SOLDIER OF FORTUNE.”

Now powers from home, and discontents at home,
Meet in one line; and vast confusion waits
(As doth a raven on a sick-fallen beast),
The imminent decay of wrested pomp.
Now happy he whose cloak and cincture can
Hold out this tempest.
A thousand businesses are brief in hand,
And heaven itself doth frown upon the land.

KING JOHN.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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JOHN OF ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.

THE BANQUET AFTER THE BATTLE.

The King doth wake to-night, and takes his rouse,
Keeps wassail, and the swaggering up-spring reels;
And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,
The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out
The triumph of his pledge.

SHAKESPEARE.

IN the great hall of the strong castle of
Mirabeau the English King sat with his nobles
and the mother-queen, and feasted, after the
recent conflict.

It was a gorgeous scene of revelry, rendered
doubly picturesque and interesting from being
held amidst the hurry of war, with the royal
host and his guests, in all the excitement of

VOL. II.

B

- the recent strife, red-handed from the field of blood of a few hours before.

The great hall of the castle was a vast, thick-walled apartment, its gloomy space being partially illumined by the iron lamp, the flaring torch, and flambeau. Two enormous fires, also, blazing upon the capacious hearths, sent forth a deep ruddy glow upon the arms and armour of the warriors assembled, whilst the flames were reflected back from whole piles of harness and weapons, which, hastily cast aside, now lay cumbering the floor around, and almost impeding the hurried exertions of the various serving-men who assisted at the board.

John sat enthroned upon the raised dais at the upper end of the hall, beneath a canopy hastily constructed from the draperies that had been torn down from the tent of Arthur, which was everywhere covered with the Lion of England and the arms of Brittany. Queen Elinor was by his side, looking the fitting mother of such a son. Both wore the regal

look, and carried the awe of majesty in their countenances; but in both might be seen at a glance the fierce and wicked spirit which possessed them.

John was now in most exuberant spirits, which showed themselves in the loudness of his conversation, and the familiarity of his manners to all around, as he laughed, talked, and quaffed off huge goblets during the feast. The Queen also seemed quite as much elated; but her stern disposition seldom permitted her to be familiar, except with those of elevated rank, or such as were deep in her confidence. She served, when present, as a check upon her son's more indiscreet moods.

"An Atè stirring him to blood and strife."

She, at the same time, possessed all the perseverance, conduct, and diplomacy, which John so much wanted. Like him, no compunctious visitings of nature could have shaken the fell purpose of Elinor, when once she was resolved upon the path to tread; but, unlike him, she always kept the goal in view. Her son's

vagaries frequently marred her projects, and rendered her deep schemes abortive; but, like Penelope, she began the web afresh, with more remorseless perseverance. John was her idol, and her opinion of his talents, his greatness, and his desert, was most extravagant. In estimation, like Cæsar, he could do no wrong.

The dark features of the King became flushed to a deep red as he drained down gold after goblet, and he shook back the curls of black hair as he laughed wildly at some sauterie of the jester, who sat upon a low stool up to his left hand; whilst the arches of the apartment rang to the clamour, the buzz of many tongues, and the bustle of the assemblage.

Almost all the knights and nobles present were at the board, as they had marched and fought in their helmets alone being doffed, and the dust and blood of the encounter hastily removed from their harness. But notwithstanding this hasty manner in which they had assembled, their bright forms and fair faces were also to be seen at the feast. The ladies attendant upon

the Queen were there; and Bertha Daundelyonne, with several of the gentlewomen who had come from England with John's power, and who had arrived just after the battle.

Amongst the foreign nobles who were at the board, the peculiar beauty of the English ladies excited considerable admiration, and many hearts were lost and won ere the tables were drawn; but the surpassing beauty of the fair maid of Kent, the fair Bertha Daundelyonne, was the theme of every tongue. She appeared indeed, amidst the ladies present, like some descended goddess in all her charms. The rich glow of her island beauty, the cheek of cream, the faultless feature, the lips that never opened but to show the pearly teeth within, showed to peculiar advantage amongst the darker complexions, and shorter and thicker figures of the fair dames of Poiteau and Brittany.

Although the stern Elinor admitted few even of the high-born nobles of her son's court to familiar intimacy, yet there was one

whom every guest present held in estimation, and every knight admired and loved—the chivalrous Faulconbridge, who, admitted to a greater share of confidence than many of higher rank with the proud Queen, was on that day seated by her side.

There was indeed in the whole demeanour of the natural son of Cœur-de-lion so much that resembled his royal sire, that no one could for a moment doubt that “he came one way of the Plantagenets.” His outward form was “perfect Richard;” and although he displayed the joyous disposition and chivalrous bearing of the lion-hearted king, there was an absence of his sterner qualities. Faulconbridge, who in the field, or even but partially aroused, showed in an instant the teeth and fangs of the raging lion, was in peace gentle and tender of heart as the coyest maiden of the land. Moreover, so generous and unselfish was his spirit, that had he possessed kingdoms to lavish, he would have bestowed them as easily as he gave alms on the highway. Horse to ride and

weapon to wear was to the Bastard all that the wide world possessed worthy of coveting.

It was owing to the total absence of self in this young soldier, that he was so entirely beloved by the stern, ambitious, and grasping nobles around, whilst his companionable qualities, reckless gallantry, and handsome person, rendered his name familiar in every court in Christendom.

"Your Highness avoids the wine-cup," he said, as the Queen poured out some of the pure element and drank it. "Methinks, after this day's exertion and fatigue, a draught of pure wine without one drop of allaying water to qualify its virtues, were more grateful than thin potations."

"The Plantagenet blood mounts quickly, coz," returned the Queen, "without the aid of stimulating drinks. We of the broom-plant are easily excited, even on ordinary occasions. See, our son grows heated already after the day's toil: we pray thee, when we retire,

remove thyself nearer to the King. 'Tis more than likely he may require thy friendly aid to-night."

"Fear him not, madam," said Faulconbridge; "he but makes a show of excessive hilarity in order to keep up the festivity of the hour."

"Call me grandam, coz," said Elinor, looking at Faulconbridge with all the kindness her stern features were capable of assuming. "Call me grandam. Thy day's service alone, thou true son of the Lion-hearted, would claim our gratitude, wert thou not so nearly of our kin."

"Nay," said the Bastard, laughing, "your royalty was but in a miserable plight this morning, to say the truth on't, when I first beheld you, cooped up in this hall. Not altogether so much at your ease as at the present moment."

"Did Elinor of Guienne shew in feature, complexion, or bearing, any tokens that she feared the danger with which she was surrounded?" enquired the Queen hastily.

"By the mass, no," returned Faulconbridge, again laughing. "I were a lying knave to say so. I would every bearded cheek here could look unblanched upon death as I have reason to know your Highness can gaze upon the bare-ribbed monster."

"Cousin," said the Queen, laying her jewelled hand upon the iron arm of the gay young knight, "look around, and tell me what thou see'st."

"I see the Majesty of England, surrounded by his chivalry," said Faulconbridge. "I see the knightly and noble of our island. The bold barons of a land hedged in with the ocean. The faithful subjects of your royal son who have spread their banners in these foreign fields, and conquered in his cause."

"Thine eyes deceive thee, cousin," said *Elinor*, setting her teeth as she glanced along the board. "Thou see'st a nest of hollow-hearted traitors, many of whom will fall from their allegiance ere many suns have set and risen."

thought to which her speculations had
rise.

"Your Highness is surely over fatigued
night," he said, "that you allow such
fancies to hold a place in your imagination.
If ever crowned king looked upon the
features of the true-hearted and the loyal
son now sees around him such an
obstacle."

"Thou art mistaken, cousin," returned he.
"Thine own truth makes thee unsuspecting
others. To no one but thyself would
I utterance to such belief. Only to thee, but
I know thou hast no tongue but for
interest. Except the Knight of Daundell,
the faithful Hubert de Burgh and some

shall see much that were better unstaid to see ere I die, but I shall never see the fair fields of England again."

"Prophetic are thy words," said a low voice close behind the Queen's chair. "England shalt thou never again behold."

The Queen turned sharply round. "Ha!" she exclaimed, as she beheld a monk, whose cowl was drawn closely over his face, slowly walk away, "have we spies so near?"

Faulconbridge, who had not heard the ominous warning, again looked at the Queen. He concluded that the excitement of the day had somewhat fatigued her, and accordingly forbore to continue the exciting theme, but sought to divert the conversation to some other topic. There was a wildness, a sort of prophetic fury, in the stern majestic features of the Queen which depressed his spirits as he gazed upon her. He drained down another cup of wine, however, and quickly forgot the subject.

"What lady is that, Madam?" he inquired, "over whom yonder swarthy esquire, with the

...with the injured Elmore

"The same," returned Faulconer, "I beg your knightship's pardon for calling him an esquire. The King had sent him. I remember me, for the road he took in the capture of your Grands Cay."

The Queen seemed to start at this as to Arthur's capture: she scowled upon Faulconer for the moment, but her glance upon his open countenance like harmless ring, as he continued to gaze upon the features of Bertha Daundelyonne. "By Heaven," he said, "she is the most radiant creature eyes ere looked on. I'll choose her mistress, and set her name in my

not beheld her ere this hour. Nay, I wonder you have never thought of achieving such a wife. She hath lands as worthy of coveting, as her beauty is rare. 'Tis the daughter of Sir Gilbert Daundelyonne—the Infanta, as she is called, of Kent."

"Your Highness speaks jestingly," returned Faulconbridge. "Thou know'st I am lord of these poor weapons I carry, and no land beside. What should such a beggar do wooing a wife? 'Twere shame to dream of such a matter: besides I am already wived."

"I heard not of your nuptials," said the Queen, laughing, "where dwells your spouse?"

"Here, in my scabbard," said Faulconbridge gaily. "The only wife I shall ever wed, depend on't. I hold but a poor opinion of the sex," he continued. "Nay, I am perhaps over blunt to say so to your Highness, but truth is truth. Large lengths of seas lay between a certain son of yours and a lady-wife I could name, or I had not been at hand to assist your Highness in your need this day. The expe-

years of my life back show me enough of woman. I shall not accommodate myself with a wife that is not dependant on me and for a poor man that were indeed but a silly venture."

"But art thou for a wife companion?" said the Queen, "thou hast considered the whole of our sex for mine own mother's behoof?"

"The gentle knight is nevertheless wise in his resolve," said Grindiborn pushing himself between the Queen and Fatherbridge. "Marriage is a marvellously prolonged engagement. We had ourself once a wife, and we repented of her all her life: heaven rest her soul! Many an old host, I know, would willingly exchange his yoke-fellow for a furred gown, or a nurse without a tongue: and for a young spendthrift soldier to wed is as deplorable as ridiculous."

"Thou art but a saucy knave," said Elinor sternly, for even the all-licensed familiarity of the chartered Jester she could ill brook. "Go to, sirrah, carry your ribaldry to some other mart: we like it not."

The amiable goodness of Faulconbridge, which descended in gentle showers of love and kindness upon the meanest of his fellow-men, could ill brook that stern majesty should dash the spirit of Gondibert, whom he knew and loved. His was the calm and constant sunshine of soul which illumines the breast of the really good man. "Nay," he said, "you must bear with my old acquaintance Gondibert : I could better brook your Highness should lend me a box on the ear, than treat him unfavourably. He is of reputation with your royal son."

Gondibert, however, was not the man to be put to silence by the frown of man or woman. Those who struck with the scabbard were sure to be hit, in return, with the blade. "There are more ways, sir soldier," he said, "of establishing reputation than one ; as the old adage speaks of killing cats. One road to reputation is the praise of such men as yourself—honest men. The other is quite as sure, —the abuse of rogues and wicked caitiffs.

The former is invariably accompanied by the latter: ergo, I am renowned in these wars, and shall thrive apace. But I pray you, Sir Knight, to answer me one question," he continued, looking towards Bertha Daundelyonne, who was at that moment engaged in conversation,—Sir Walter Mauluc and another knight, striving to win her notice and favour on either side; "which will a fair dame sooner forgive, a slight or a liberty? You see yonder dark-visaged Mauluc is emboldened by having had chivalry's imprint stamped upon his shoulder this day. He hath snatched the portrait of the lady from her neck, and returned the chain, but the picture is hidden in his breast."

"I am ill at reading the female heart," observed Faulconbridge; "I cannot answer thy query."

"Marry," said Gondibert, "the answer is before us. Yonder proud damsel, although she scorn the thief, is flattered by the theft. Had he but stolen the gold chain, and returned the picture, I would not answer for the conse-

quences; she would have raised this knightly assemblage with her reproaches, and we should have had the poltroon hanged up to scare the daws that circle around the highest towers of this castle."

"Thou art a shrewd companion," said Faulconbridge; "nought escapes thy piercing ken."

"Why, look ye," resumed Gondibert, "but a few weeks back we were peaceful sojourners by the white cliffs of Kent. Our lady, yonder, engaged to wed a young noble of those parts. Then came the roll of tucket, the blast of trumpet, and the hurry of war. The young Lord of Folkstone slighted the beauty,—and mark the return. Report speaks him slain in this day's hot contention. Doth she feel his loss? Doth the minstrelsy which brays out from yonder gallery sound less sweetly? Doth the homage of these cavaliers around appear less grateful? Ergo, ladies can forgive a liberty, but never a slight."

"Ha!" exclaimed Faulconbrige, "hath Lord

Folkstone fallen ! We saw him beside us in the thickest of the battle. I missed him not at the board until your words recalled him to my recollection."

"Heaven help us!" said the Jester, "for we seldom think much of helping each other. We walk in a continual fog, cousin; everything immediately around us is clear, but beyond the little circle of ourselves, all is mist."

"Nay," said Faulconbridge, rising, "I will give orders to search the field: the Lord of Folkstone may be but wounded, after all."

"Trouble not yourself, Sir Richard," said Gondibert; "the Knight of Daundelyonne hath done that already. He sent out some of his followers to scour the field around so soon as he missed his friend here in the town. But see, the King is deep in converse with the Lords Salisbury and Pembroke. There is one here beneath us, Sir Knight, but a few short feet from all this gaiety and revelry, whose state I feel for: who this morning thought to hold out his palm to be kissed by the nobles

around him, but who now finds his limbs fettered with ungentle steel. Prince Arthur,— he, I wager, is the subject of conversation amongst the guests there. Heaven help him, say I, for the lion hath his paw upon the poor mouse of royalty.”

The brow of the Bastard became overcast at the words of Gondibert ; he sighed, but made no reply to Gondibert’s speech. “Yonder Brabançon knights at the lower end of the board,” he said, “grow noisy in their cups. See, Queen Elinor takes the hint and rises.”

John arose as she did so. “I shall hold conference with your Highness ere I retire,” he said, as she passed out at the door at the upper end of the hall. “In one hour expect me in your apartment. I come alone : we have matters of deep import to confer of to-night.” The Queen bowed and passed on, attended by her maidens and the rest of the ladies.

As Bertha Daundelyonne passed, the King stepped a pace or two towards her, and stayed

her progress for a moment, addressing a few sentences in a low tone in her not unwilling ear. "We find ourself, beauteous Bertha," he said, "in the presence of that resplendent sun of beauty, which dazzles all eyes, and yet the cares of state hinder us from enjoying its rays. The meanest of our followers hath this day been happier than ourself. Will the lady Bertha grant her captive knight an interview in the pleasaunce to-morrow at dawn?"

"I am in attendance upon your royal mother," returned Bertha, proudly. "Your Highness best knows how she might approve that one of her maidens taking the air so early, and so accompanied. But, in truth, I like not the raw air of daybreak, my liege; permit me to pass; your Highness hath drawn the eyes of all the assemblage upon us."

"Ha!" said the King, drawing back and permitting Bertha to pass on; "but we shall find a way to lower that proud spirit, and make it fly an ordinary pitch."

"We drink one more round," he exclaimed,

throwing himself back in his oaken chair, "to the fair damsels who have graced our board."

" 'To the royal lady who hath honoured the feast with her presence,' " cried Lord Salisbury rising, followed by the whole assemblage, " 'To Elinor of England.' "

The warriors drained their cups, as the kettle drum and trumpets sounded out a martial flourish.

" 'To the grace and ornament of society,' " said the King, again rising. "Fill high the cup, lords, and drain it to the dregs, for never was there a more beauteous subject pledged. 'To the exquisite and unmatched, the lovely Bertha Daundelyonne.' "

The revel now "grew fast and furious;" though John, unlike his usual custom, kept himself a good deal apart from the assemblage. He sat back in his chair in deep and earnest conversation with Sir Walter Mauluc and a Brabançon Knight. Deep thought was on his brow. At length he sent Mauluc to desire Faulconbridge, who was now revelling at

the lower end of the board, to join him "Cousin," he said, "we need your services you must for England speedily. We shall our self be there before long; but ere our coming we commission you to raise money amongst the clergy. The fat abbey-lands must furnish forth gold for these wars. You understand us coz? Let not the lazy drones evade you but rout out their hoarded treasure."

"Your Highness shall be obeyed," said Faulconbridge, rising. "I leave Mirabeau this night. The monks shall speedily pray for your Highness."

"'Tis well," observed the King, glancing after him. "Our life on't, two purposes are served. Our cousin despises the clergy from his soul, and will squeeze the chest of those hoarding abbots without remorse; meanwhile we would not have him present here at this time. Ha! said I not wisely, Sir Mauluc?"

"Your Highness hath acted with your usual wisdom," answered the Poitevin, bowing.

"Could we manage the matter discreetly,

said John, again addressing himself in a low voice to his two companions, "could we contrive to get the damsel of Brittany into our power, we might then, indeed, sleep in more security."

"My life upon't," said the Brabançon, "if your royalty empowers me to treat with the persons I have named, and will indeed furnish me with sufficient gold, I engage to transact the matter to your satisfaction."

"I swear to thee, Sir Knight, upon the honour of a King."

"Pardon me, my Lord," said the Brabançon; "the strongest oath is not binding with me. I am slow of belief in most matters; but as I believe your Highness wishes for the custody both of the brother and sister in this matter, and will really furnish me forth, I undertake the commission. Always providing that, as I run my neck into danger in your service, you permit me to suggest the mode in which the money shall be forthcoming on the delivery of the princess into whichever of your royal castles

in Normandy it shall please your Highness direct."

"Manage it as you will," said the King, it be done; I am satisfied."

The conversation was now carried on in under-tone between the triumvirate, and King soon afterwards arose and left the hall.

After the King had retired, Mauluc and Brabançon remained where they had been holding conference with him, and continued for some time in earnest conversation. Most of the nobles, on the departure of John, also retired, and the company was now divided into little knots or parties; some talking up the events of the day; others still pledging each other from the wine-flask; whilst others again rattled the dice-box, and staked many a fair acre in England upon a cast.

Whilst the Poitevin and the Brabançon held a deep and earnest conversation, a monk who had been seated beside the ample fire, and had joined their party. He seemed known to them, although he wore his cowl drawn close

over his features, for they offered no objection **to** his joining in the conversation.

Meanwhile, Gondibert, who had stalked **about** the hall uttering his conceits to the different parties around, appeared to keep his **eye** especially upon this trio.

"When three such pernicious caitiffs get **together**," he muttered to himself, "it is said **honest** folks are likely to come to harm. I **would** I might catch a few words of that **whispered** villany."

The Jester fetched a turn or two, as he said **this**. One minute he caressed a large stag-hound which was dreaming of the chase before the hearth; he then busied himself in examining a huge blade which lay near the place where the parties he had his eye upon were seated; and the next minute he appeared to be observing the throne which had been hastily constructed for the King, which was close by where the three were conversing. Presently he fidgetted himself into the throne, as if to try its comfortable seat, then he whisked out of it

and peeped behind; he then threw himself into it again, drew up his feet, and sat coiled up as if composing himself to sleep; quietly disposing the drapery over his person so as nearly to conceal himself.

The Jester had managed matters with so much cunning and discretion, and so absorbed were the trio in their conversation, that they had totally failed to notice his last manoeuvre, and he sat quietly ensconced but a few feet from their whispered conference quite unsuspected—his eyes closed, his legs crossed, his hands clasped, and his ears open. The midnight bell sounded as the Jester sat motionless upon the royal seat, and still Mauluc and his companions held their secret council. Whilst by degrees, as guest after guest departed to seek their couches or quarters in the town, none but themselves were left, except some half a dozen knights who, flustered with flowing cups, sat with their heads leaning upon their folded arms and dozing at the end of the hall. At length, the trio seemed to

make a movement as if about to separate, and filled a parting chalice as they still lingered over their conference.

"So much, then," said Mauluc, "is agreed on between us, and all goes thrivingly. Methinks thou ow'st me something, De Brabant, for the introduction I gave thee to the King."

"It may chance to serve your own turn, Sir Mauluc," remarked the other, "as this night's conference hath shown. Should John, as you half suspect, conclude to play false with you in regard to the heiress of Daundelyonne, my castle walls may serve you at need. The fair maid of Kent once within the walls of Boislenoir and in your power, if she sue not to be wedded within twenty-four hours, I will consent to be flayed alive and hung up to the battlements as a scare-crow. The youth who was to have wedded her, you say, is put to silence; we need therefore fear no impediment in that quarter. How say ye that was managed?"

"I assailed him in the field," replied Mauluc, "whilst he was aiding Faulconbridge to save

the Queen. I pierced him through the neck with my lance, when engaged hand to hand with him, and he fell in the midst of the mob, where he was doubtless quickly trodden and mangled.

"Say my use the deed?" enquired De Prebost.

"None that I wit of," said Marlow: "besides I was myself at that moment unknown. My shield was broken and my crest riven off. Hark! what noise was that? Methought I heard something like a smothered laugh behind those hangings. Nay: 'tis but the wind piping in the chimney."

"Twas well done," said the monk: "the young spark defied my wrath in my own walls of Salmestone. I had intended to have dealt with him myself, but thou hast saved my labour. Yet, hark thee, Sir Knight; one essential matter in which we are all three deeply concerned, you have totally forgotten."

The monk now spoke so earnestly and yet in so low a tone, that Gondibert, in his eagerness to hear the words, forgot his discretion so

far as to open the drapery and pop his head out, holding the curtains close under his throat, so that, in the dim light of the half-expiring lamps, he looked a most ludicrously terrific object—a sort of phantom of a bodiless head; and, as ill luck would have it, the stench of one of the flickering lights caused him to sneeze aloud.

“Atchough!” sneezed the Jester, to the no small amazement of the three. The monk was the first to catch a sight of the object, which at the first glance he concluded was the devil in person, and commenced telling his beads with amazing rapidity.

The Brabançon, too, was equally astounded; but Mauluc, who had an instinctive hatred of Gendibert, knew him instantly, and saw that most likely he had heard every word of their conference.

“Atchough!” again sneezed the Jester, as the Poiteven started from his seat and drew his blade.

“Ha!” he cried, as he whirled the weapon round his head and plunged it through the

curtain, and into the spot where the body of the Jester would have been had he remained to receive the thrust, "to the fiends with thee, thou meddling, prying, sneering calf! I have long vowed to reward thy impertinence with my rapier's point, and here thou hast it!" As he spoke, Mauluc passed his blade across the curtain and again through the curtains of the throne, whose cushion gave a sort of sigh every time the weapon pierced it.

Gondibert, however, was too nimble to be thus caught. He had slipped down like a eel from the throne, and unseen, had ensconced himself beneath the table, where unbuckling the strong waist-belt by which his motley was girded, he passed it over the right and left legs of the Brabançon knight and monk, and then emerging from beneath the board on the other side, made his escape.

"Thus perish all prying spies," said Mauluc, sheathing his sword, as he glanced down the hall to see that those at its extremity were asleep. "I knew that knave and my boy would become acquainted ere long; best I

the hall quickly, and it will be supposed he **hath** been slain in some brawl brought on by **his** ill-tongued jests."

"Your gown is entangled in my spur," said **the** Brabançon, as he and the monk hastily arose. "I pray you disengage it, lest I fall to **the** ground."

"Tis my sandal, Knight," returned the monk, "which has caught hold of some part of **thy** harness. I pr'ythee disengage it with less violence, or I shall surely be thrown headlong **upon** the pavement."

"What devil's contrivance have we here?" inquired the angry Brabançon. "Thou art surely playing some trick upon me, Sir Priest. Now, by the blessed mother of Heaven, I'll brain thee with my dagger, unless you release my right leg from this vile thralldom."

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" shouted Gondibert, from the other end of the hall, where he stood beneath the arched passage, ready to vanish at a moment's warning,—**"Ha! Ha! Ha!"**

The Jester laughed so heartily at the scene

he had caused, that he awoke the sleeper
the end of the hall.

"Now the red pestilence strike thee!"
a half drowsy Breton knight; "is this a
for thy cursed jests? Begone, sirrah, I
thrust thee hence."

"Look ye, brother," said Gondibert, pointing
to the entangled monk and man-at-
"there's Bigotry murdering Religion.
pray you step up and apprehend the
prit."

"How is this?" said Mauluc, as he
in astonishment at the floundering pair,
now, fairly entangled amongst the stools
benches, in their violent efforts came clatt
to the ground, the Brabançon beneath an
gownsmen uppermost.

"Rise," said Mauluc, angrily, who
cluded that the pair had unaccountably
out whilst his back had been turned; "
and cease this unseemly struggle, lest
tempted to spurn thee with my foot."

But the prostrate friar finding himself

able to disengage his leg, and fearing the Brabançon would keep his word, thought it best to secure him whilst he had the advantage, and accordingly seized his opponent, and held him with all his might, endeavouring to pinion his arms to his sides.

The Brabançon upon this, more enraged than ever, plunged and struggled to disengage himself, and the pair fell to buffets with such strength and resolution, that the spectators, who had rushed to the upper end of the hall, were convulsed with laughter at the scene; in the midst of which the tables and chairs were overthrown; whilst Mauluc, scandalized at the whole affair, and conceiving that his two companions had suddenly become bewitched, hastily retired from the hall, and shut himself up in his chamber.

CHAPTER II.

THE BIRD IN A CAGE.

For, since the birth of Cain, the first male child,
To him that did but yesterday suspire,
There was not such a gracious creature seen.

But now will canker sorrow eat his bud,
And chase the native beauty from his cheek,
And he will look as hollow as a ghost;
As dim and meagre as an ague's fit;
And so he'll die.

SHAKESPEARE.

K. Edw'd. Bring forth the gallant, let us hear him speak :
What!—can so young a thorn begin to prick!
Edward, what satisfaction canst thou make,
For bearing arms, for stirring up my subjects,
And all the trouble thou hast turned me to?

Prince. Speak like a subject, proud ambitious York!
Suppose that I am now my father's mouth;
Resign the chair, and, while I stand, kneel thou.

Clarence. Untutor'd lad, thou art too malapert.

IBID.

WHILST the transactions we have described
in our last chapter were taking place, the

unhappy Arthur was shut up a close prisoner in one of the strong towers of the castle. 'Twas indeed but a thin court for the poor unflattered Prince, that strong room and the small attendance to which he was now reduced. Bereft suddenly of home, relatives, and friends, alone in the midst of his enemies, a prisoner, and in the hands of his bitter foe, —the portentous object of his infant fears, —the youthful Prince was almost without hope.

It was not precisely a dungeon to which he had been conveyed, and yet, although the apartment was used even by the knightly and noble as an occasional dwelling-place in those iron days, to the eyes of many in the present times it would have appeared but a cell for solitary confinement in some bastile. It was a small turret-chamber. One single arrow-slit alone admitted the light of heaven, and even that, narrow as it was, was barred with iron,—a small oaken table and one chair being the sole accommodation afforded.

The Prince was clad in the suit of chain-

mail and the embroidered surcoat in which he had been taken; his helmet was lying where it had been cast on his first entrance within this narrow dwelling. He sat, as he had for many hours remained since his capture, his head bowed down upon the table; and resting upon his folded arms, deep and audible sob-disclosing the deep emotion of his soul. He was not alone. As if the security of strong doors, iron bolts, and enormous walls, were not deemed sufficient for the stripling of eighteen a mailed warrior, armed from head to heel, his drawn weapon in his hand, his beaver closed, stood immediately opposite, glaring through the bars of his helmet upon the hapless captive, as the faint light of the closing day gradually waxed fainter and fainter through the narrow embrasure of the prison—a dark shadowy figure, masked in his impenetrable suit of mail, who by the royal order was shut up within the same chamber the young Prince tenanted; his guard, his spy, an evil eye upon him, even in the depths of his despair. To those whose veins bound

the rich blood of kings, the prison scene was **frequently** but a prelude to the grave, and well **did** the youthful Prince know that loss of **liberty** was loss of all. An ignoble death **seemed** to frown upon him in his narrow **prison-house**, whilst the sounds of music and **revelry** from the distant hall mocked the **hopeless** misery of his soul.

Suddenly he raised his tear-stained face, **and** gazed around the dark walls of his cell, **fixing** a long look upon the narrow opening on **one** side. It seemed to him that the clear **fresh** air of heaven had already been denied to him.

"My mother!" he said, "my poor mother! **this** will break her heart. She will die of **grief**." A flood of tears relieved his over-charged heart as he again buried his face in his hands. Presently he raised his head, and rising from his seat confronted the dark form of the warrior before him.

"Fellow," he said, as the spirit of the Plantagenet arose in his bosom, "who hath placed thee here?"

"I have my orders, my Lord," returned the man, "from those who must be obeyed."

"Art thou thus planted sentinel over me, wretch, in order to commit murder, when sleep overtakes my miserable eye-lids?" demanded the Prince indignantly.

"I have no such commission," returned the figure.

"If thou hast," said the Prince, "betake thee to thine office; I defy thee and thy weapon alike. I am unarmed, but I spit at thee; thou shalt find the Plantagenet will not die unavenged. I will tear thee, caitiff, and strew this cell with thy bones, if thou darrest assail me where I stand."

"Be composed, my Lord," said the man-at-arms, "I am not here to harm thee. Thy safety is demanded at my hands. By the King's order I am here, and should aught happen to thee, my poor life were worth but a small purchase,—I should be flayed alive."

"Leave me, sir," exclaimed the Prince; "I command it; I would be alone. If mine uncle hath placed thee here, I order thee to depart:

I, Arthur of Bretagne, King of England, lord over the usurping John, and all that he enjoys."

"I have not the power, even if I had the will, to obey you," said the figure; "I am as much a prisoner as yourself."

"I pray you, pardon me, good friend," said the Prince, stepping up and holding out his hand to the mailed warrior; "I have done thee wrong. Thou art unhappy in thine office, and I would it were in my power to release thee from it, for both our sakes."

"I would it were, my Lord," said the other, as he took the hand the young Prince had offered him, and carried it to his lips.

"Ha!" said the Prince, involuntarily; hope, on the sudden, rising in his breast, when he found his guard susceptible of compassion. "There is then a gentle heart within that iron shell. Good friend," he continued, again approaching the man, and seizing his hand, "are there no means of escape?"

"None," said the man-at-arms. "Twice fifteen thousand English hearts have followed in thy royal uncle's train, to compass the work

this day hath crowned with success. Bethink thee, Prince, for a moment, and then reckon the chance thou hast of escaping from the midst of such a host."

"I have friends more powerful than John, who would aid us," observed the Prince. "Could I but once again find myself free. I could make thee great beyond thy fondest wishes. Thou shouldst live the cherished friend, the deliverer of a Prince; a mother's and a royal sister's blessing should attend thee. Philip of France would heap honours upon thy name, so thou but showed me some means to escape this horrible captivity."

"Tis of no avail," said the other; "I cannot aid thee, if I would. The bare attempt would but insure to thee harsher usage, and for myself death under unheard-of tortures."

"I have reason to know," resumed the Prince, "that my cruel uncle is hated by one half of those who have this day stricken on his side,—that his cruelty, injustice, and tyranny, are daily losing him hosts of friends."

"I may not deny the truth of your words,"

said the sentinel. "The issue of this day's battle and your own ill fortune, have, however, rivetted the loyalty of many who might have fallen from their allegiance to your Highness's favour, had the day gone otherwise."

The conversation of the captive Prince and his companion was at this period interrupted by the opening of a small door, which was so artfully contrived that in the gloomy light of the turret chamber it was not easy to discover its whereabouts, unless previously known, and being painted in imitation of stone it appeared a part of the thick wall.

The small door, however, now gently and noiselessly revolved upon its hinges, and stepping down from the winding steps which were cut in the thickness of the wall itself, some half a dozen armed men, the foremost of whom carried a lamp in his hand, entered the apartment.

The second person who entered the turret chamber was a tall and majestic-looking man, his dark and somewhat sullen countenance bearing the awe and dread of majesty upon it.

A short dark moustache covered his upper lip, which curled with an ever-during sneer, and showed to advantage the pearly teeth within, whilst his beard, which was suffered to grow entirely round his chin, was worn unclipped, to about an inch in length. He wore a surcoat over his armour, on which the rampant lion was blazoned from seam to seam. It was John of England. Of the five persons who accompanied him, four were his personal attendants; the fifth was Hubert de Burgh.

The King advanced a pace before the others, who halted so soon as they entered the turret chamber. He gave one rapid glance at the Prince, and then turned sharply upon the armed sentinel.

"We are well served in thee, thou caitiff," he said sternly, "who talkest treason even in the heart of our fortress. 'Tis well we possess the means of detecting the opinions of such politic knaves as thyself. Go, bear him hence," he said, as two esquires suddenly, at a signal, seized upon the man, and held him firmly. "Let his head be struck off upon the

settlements as a terror to all who palter with the prisoners they are placed to watch."

"Nay, I pray thee," pleaded the Prince, recovering from the surprise the sudden appearance of his dreaded uncle had first excited, "I pray thee, let not the fault I myself have caused be visited upon this soldier. Believe me, he hath said nothing but what I have wrung from his unwilling lips. He is true to thy service,—true as the steel he carries."

"Hence!" exclaimed the King impatiently, pointing with his hand to the door; "hence with the foul-mouthed traitor; he shall die, were he of our own kindred."

"Thus perish all who serve a cruel and a wicked tyrant," said the man as he was led out.

"Arthur of Bretagne," said John, as soon as the iron door was closed, "we have descended from our state to visit thee in thy prison-house, because we would fain be to thee a friend rather than an enemy. Yonder

sovereign.

"'Tis false!" replied the youth, rearing self proudly before his uncle, and interlarded him. "'Tis false! I never wronged thee, thou who wrongest me, who enjoyest the throne I inherited at my birth. England was my father's, and Geoffrey was my sire; what hast thou to usurp my kingdom, and make me here a prisoner in this dungeon?"

"Thine is indeed but a narrow kingdom," returned John, glancing round the apartment, "wherein to arbitrate the question of right."

"The fouler crime is thine," answered the youth, "thus to lodge me."

"My possessions, cousin," returned

ie of England have flown like so
-down before the tempest."

l our rights might be settled in
erved Arthur scornfully, "face to

of this," said John impatiently.
ot here to argue the question of
hee, boy; that were indeed ridicu-
ert," he said, turning to his at-
remain; and do you, De Bossu,
ove; we have matter to discuss
ivate nature with our cousin."

bowed and withdrew, leaving only
Burgh with John and the young

t waste of time, cousin," said John,
ssing the Prince, "for thee and me
of our rights. I have visited thee
o tell thee of the hopelessness and
r pretensions. Resign them at once.
in, our friend, and ally, and in the
f our affection we will grant thee
a more than the hand of France,

backed as he is with hollow-hearted allies, could have ever hoped to gain thee."

"My life sooner," replied the Prince firmly, his soft blue eye flashing with anger. "Ere I consent to dishonour myself by such a deed, I will embrace the cruellest fate thy iron heart hath power to inflict. England, Ireland, Poitou, Anjou, Touraine, and Maine, are mine, mine in the sight of all the world; and I were base, dishonourable, and a stain to the knight-hood I profess, did I consent to relinquish my right to them."

"Ha!" exclaimed John, his brow growing black as midnight as he marked the spirit of his nephew. "This is indeed a dangerous shoot from the parent stock."

"I scorn thy proffered friendship," continued the aroused youth. "'Tis for me to forgive and offer friendship; me, thy nephew and rightful sovereign."

"Thou refusest, then, my proffer of alliance and friendship, boy?" observed John, smiling scornfully at the Prince's outbreak. "Thou

refusest to resign thy pretensions and accept of love and favour at our hands?"

"I do," replied Arthur; "I scorn thine offer."

"Think of thy mother, boy," said John sneeringly.

"She would trample upon such offers," returned the Prince, "as I tear and trample upon this senseless gaud." As he spoke, the enraged youth tore the embroidered scarf from his shoulder, and stamped upon it with his iron heel.

"Alas, I do but rave," he said, as he stooped and took the scarf from the floor. "The lovely queen of Philip scarce thought I should thus use the scarf her fair fingers embroidered for me. Sweet princess, forgive me, for I have need, heaven help me, of thy pity now."

The youthful Prince, with the changeable mood so common at his years, forgetting for the moment his resentment in the feelings the sight of the scarf had suddenly conjured up, together with the affection he entertained for the beautiful creature who had wrought it, and

who had promised him victory and triumph as she placed it over his shoulders, now stood apparently lost in thought, and, as he pressed the gift to his lips, the tears

“Coursed each other down his innocent cheeks
In piteous chase.”

The eye of John marked the change, and he once more essayed him in his softer mood.

“We offer thee fair, cousin,” he said; “be advised, and consider well, ere you reject our proffered friendship and alliance.”

“I have answered thee,” said Arthur. “Did I think my tongue could syllable the word conferring coronets upon thy head and dishonour upon mine, I would tear it from its babbling cage and cast it at my feet. Begone and leave me to myself; death were preferable to a life of shame.”

“Ha!” said John, as his hand stole toward the dagger at his girdle, “say’st thou?” His eyeballs rolled for a few minutes while he meditated violence, but as his glance met the steady gaze of Hubert, his brow became more contracted, and his eyes sought the ground.

The Prince, meanwhile, stood unmoved before him. He beheld the dreaded uncle whose name had been his infant fear—the bugbear of the nursery,—the powerful John of England, his hereditary foe,—he beheld this dreaded enemy sink into a mean, pitiful villain, whose glance quailed before his own steady and undaunted gaze.

The King stood for a brief space with his eyes rivetted upon the damp stone floor of the chamber, the forefinger of his right hand pressing against his lips: he then gradually raised his head, gave one scowl of concentrated hate at the fair features of his graceful nephew, and signing to Hubert to follow, hastily left the chamber by the way he had entered, and closing the iron door carefully behind him, the unhappy Prince was left in solitude and darkness.

The ascent from the tower led to a vast apartment situated about the centre of the keep of the castle. It was hung with arras, and cumbrously yet splendidly furnished. A fire blazed upon the ample hearth, and the

coats of arms of knights and barons of former days were carved and blazoned around. (The gorgeous trappings and splendour of feudal times there was plenty; of the comfort of modern days there was none. The lamp flared upon the massive table in the streaming draught which was admitted through the windows at either end, and whilst the proud banners of ancestral chivalry hung from the roof, the floor was strewn with rushes. Yet this was the apartment of the mother-queen—of Elinor of Guyenne.

The Queen was quite alone and seated beside the table when the King and Hubert entered. Her stern but piercing eye sought her son's glance as he advanced, Hubert remaining at the entrance of the apartment. "How now! my son," she said, as John seated himself on a stool placed opposite her, and turned his eyes upon the crackling logs upon the hearth. "You have failed?"

The King turned his face towards her, but made no reply.

"I knew it," said Elinor, interpreting his

glance, "I foretold that the ambitious Constance had too well tutored her darling. She hath so long promised him a crown, the boy will not relinquish it but with life: a fearful and bloody arbitration must ensue."

"Hubert," said the King, "remain within call. Let no one interrupt us; we would confer on matters of import for a brief space."

The deep and dangerous conference of the royal pair was brief as it was important. What it was, indeed, the dark arras and stone-built walls alone could have revealed, for no living ears but their own ever received confession of its purport. But its secret whisperings boded ill to the captive son and widowed Constance. As soon as it was ended, the King arose from his seat and himself trimmed the lamp which was placed on the table, as his eye passed over the gloomy apartment. He then called aloud to Hubert and bade him enter.

"Good Hubert," he said confidingly, "we have reason to know thy truth and loyalty.

To-night we have more need of thy service than in all the fore part of our reign. Thou must to horse with all speed, good friend. We would have thee leave Mirabeau secretly and suddenly. A strong and sufficient force will attend upon thy safety. Arthur of Bretagne travels in thy charge."

Hubert started, and glanced from the King to Elinor; he then bowed his head.

"And my destination, my liege?" he said.

"The strong castle of Falaise," answered John, turning from Hubert's steady eye, and pacing up and down the apartment. "Yea. The strong castle of Falaise."

"We have here," continued the King, stopping as he placed his hand upon a packet lying upon the table, "an intercepted letter, by which we learn that Philip lies before Arques. Our drums shall sound in his ears, ere report of this battle reach him; away then, good Hubert; to thy conduct and tried fidelity I commit this business;—we would not have our nephew with us on this march."

As Hubert bowed and withdrew, the King

summoned an attendant and bade him desire the immediate presence of Walter Mauluc.

"Thou wilt immediately prepare for the road, Sir Walter," said the King; "Prince Arthur travels under strong guard in Hubert's charge. Thou wilt accompany the party, and keep thyself in immediate attendance upon the prisoner. Should there be an attempt at rescue, the Prince must not be suffered to escape. You understand me? drive your dagger to his heart at the first symptom of a surprise. Enough: William de la Bray goes with thee. Farewell! Fidelity will ensure promotion."

The black-browed Poitevin bowed and withdrew to make preparations, and the royal mother and her son were once more left to their own counsel.

The clouds of night had for some hours descended upon the town of Mirabeau, and the citizens, together with that portion of the English army crowded within its walls, were buried in deep sleep. The bustle of armed thousands, and the turmoil of war had sunk down into silence, one solitary light flashing

occasionally from window to window in the upper apartments of the huge dark keep, alone proclaiming to the sentinel as he paced the ramparts, that the watchful eye of care which renders the night "joint labourer with the day," still kept vigil in the royal apartments.

"Is all quiet here?" inquired the officer of the guard coming up with a few file, as he made his rounds along the walls. "Quite so," replied the sentinel, as he started on hearing the question, having been so intent in watching the passing shadows which continually moved backwards and forwards in the apartment above, that the guard had approached him almost unobserved.

"Keep stricter watch here, sir knave," said the other. "What light is that above?"

"'Tis in the King's apartments," replied the sentinel, "I have been observing it. Those two shadows have passed and repassed any time these two hours."

"Heed them not, sirrah," returned the other, "keep good watch townwards. Has any one passed on your post here within the last hour?"

"Several," replied the sentinel.

"Who were they?" inquired the officer; "of course they had the King's private signal?"

"Marry, had they," said the soldier, "or they would have tasted cold steel. Sir Hubert de Burgh but now passed down towards the stables, with Sir Walter Mauluc not a quarter of an hour back. There is some stir too on the other side the castle. I think a troop is getting to horse there. Now, if I might venture an opinion, I should say the royal captive has been removed from the tower near my beat. I saw a large party in charge of a prisoner descend the terrace steps."

"Go to," said the serjeant; "thine eyes are quick enough to spy out what thou hast nothing to do with, but over slow to observe that which they ought to see! An' I catch thee slumbering upon thy post again, thou shalt feel the weight of my lance, and taste the dungeon beneath the swan-tower."

The officer's reprimand was suddenly cut short by the sound of a large body of horse leaving the court-yard of the castle. They

emerged through the gate-house, and took their way beneath the outward walls of the fortress appearing bolder and fainter, as they made for one of the city gates. They were there challenged by the warder, when a tall and stately-looking knight galloped up to the front and gave the word,—“John of England!”

He then leapt from his courser, and held brief conversation with the captain of the gate-house: after which, the iron-studded gates were quickly opened, the portcullis was drawn up, the drawbridge lowered, and the dark mass of horsemen filed beneath the arch, into the open country—a long line of cavaliers at least two thousand strong, the flaring cresset which the gate-house porter held aloft as he stood within the archway, glancing in flashes of flame upon their chain-mail, as they passed.

Quickly and regularly they filed through the gateway, and over the bridge; the leader sitting like a pillar of iron, to peruse them as they passed out. He then galloped up to the centre of the party, and reined his steed be-

side a horse-litter which was strongly guarded in the midst, and bidding the cavalcade move onwards at a brisk pace, they quickly vanished in the gloom, taking their way over the field which had been the scene of strife but a few hours previously.

CHAPTER III.

THE FIELD OF BLOOD.

Lucius. Soft, ho! what trunk is here,
Without his top?—

How! a page!—
Or dead, or sleeping on him?—

Thy name?

Imogen.

Fidele.

Lucius. Thou dost approve thyself the very name:
Thy name well fits thy faith; thy faith thy name.
Wilt take thy chance with me? I will not say,
Thou shalt be so well master'd; but, be sure,
No less beloved.

SHAKESPEARE.

WE must now return for a brief space, to
the field near Mirabeau.

The battle had swept through a small orchard which lay to the left of Prince Arthur's camp. A severe encounter had taken place here between a large body of French chevaliers

and some of the Kentish men. The Daundelyonnes, father and son, had led the charge, which had been received by the French just at the edge of the orchard. The contest had been a deadly one, the combatants having fought with great animosity for some hours. The youthful page whom we before left in charge of the wounded knight, after watching the distant party of horsemen in the vain hope of being able to make them aware of one of the party being still alive upon the field,—for he plainly distinguished the banner of the Daundelyonnes fluttering in the blast,—turned his eyes upon the orchard, which lay about a couple of bow-shot from the spot on which the young Lord of Folkstone lay. Could he but manage to bear the wounded knight beneath the sheltering boughs of the trees in the orchard, it would be better, he thought, than allowing him to lie in the bleak winds which swept over the open plain.

The sharp night air, however, was beneficial to his charge, inasmuch as it froze and clotted

the blood upon the wound, and rendered more secure the bandage with which it had been bound.

After awhile, the knight revived under the page's care, and gazed earnestly in his face, as he sat supported in the youth's arms.

"Art thou some vision," he said, "or is it indeed true that I behold the face of one I have long thought dead? Tell me, fair boy; we have met before, in other lands. Thou art not what thou seemest."

The youth smiled, and placed his finger on his lip. "You must remain quiet, my Lord," he said, "unless you wish your wound to open afresh. Ask no question of me now. We have a long night to endure upon the wold, unless succour comes, which now I think is hardly likely."

Whilst, however, the young knight continued to gaze upon his preserver in the clear moonlight which slept upon the open field, he became more and more convinced, now that he saw the countenance of the page displayed

without the hood which had before hidden it, that he was tended by the lovely girl he had rescued from the hands of a savage mob in England, and whom he had so long thought dead. A faintness overcame him as he endeavoured to rise, and reach the orchard towards which the page pointed, and as he felt himself supported upon the soft bosom of his attendant, his suspicions were still more confirmed.

"Remain not with me here, fair creature," he said, "you will perish in this bleak air. I pray you make your way towards the town, and provide for your own safety. Believe me, I am too much hurt to survive."

"Could I be assured you would not be molested in my absence," returned the page, "it were perhaps better to seek some of your followers, and procure assistance."

"For your own sake," said the knight, "endeavour to gain the city walls, or some shelter."

The youth hesitated. It was necessary that something should be done. He looked

around in doubt ; when between himself and the wood he beheld a dark troop, like a pack of hounds, their noses upon the ground, come sweeping towards them.

“ Ha ! ” he exclaimed, “ lost ! lost ! I see the wolves upon our trail.”

As the ravenous beasts came on, however, the distant gallop of steeds was heard upon the plain. The wolves stopped at the sound, uttered a deep-mouthed growl, and swept off out of sight, their yapping cry coming down the wind like that of dogs in full chase.

Meanwhile, the hollow sound of hoofs upon the turf became louder and louder, and presently a plump of spears, and a knight’s pennon, were seen in full gallop at a short distance from them on the right. The heart of the page now beat high with hope, but it was soon dashed. The party would evidently shoot past without nearing them. The young lord took his bugle from his side, but a faint and wailing blast was all he could wind upon it. The page tried to sound a few notes, but failed of making it utter a single note.

"Methinks I should know that rider yonder," cried the Knight, as he gazed upon the party, which as they swept along in the distance, were not only easily to be distinguished; but the joyous laugh of their leader, and even here and there, a word were to be caught.

"I cannot be easily mistaken in yonder rider," said the Knight, "although it is impossible in this light to discern the device upon his shield and banner."

"Many lying around us, here," said the page, "were this day stricken by his powerful arm. It is the brave champion who rescued the Queen at the moment you yourself were struck down. I would we could attract his notice."

"It is, indeed," said the Knight; "there rides one possessing the noblest heart and strongest arm in Christendom. 'Tis the gallant Faulconbridge."

It was in vain that the page made every effort to engage the attention of the party. They galloped rapidly past, and the hoof-

tread of their steeds soon died away in the distance.

As the night grew colder, the page stripped some of the gorgeous trappings from a wounded charger which lay groaning beside them, and covered the Knight partially with them. Suddenly, after some hours had been thus passed by the page in listening to the long-drawn howl of the wolf, and the sharp cry of the hill-fox, he became aware of some figures prowling towards the spot. The convent-bell from the distant tower was plainly to be heard, as the page, bending all his energies, listened to and watched the approaching figures. At first he thought that assistance was at hand, but a short time served to undeceive him, and proclaim the real character of the comers.

When they reached a spot distant about a bow-shot from him, and where likewise several of the slain were lying, the page beheld them busily engaged in rifling the bodies of the fallen. One ruffianly-looking caitiff, who was accompanied by a woman carrying a large

wallet on her back, he distinctly saw in the act of despatching a wounded knight. He heard the deep execration of the helpless warrior as the murderous villain drove his blade through the closed bars of the helmet, after which he stripped the victim of his knightly chain, and whatever else of value was upon his person.

To the relief of the page, as his blood ran chill in his veins whilst he continued to watch the camp followers, and observe them in their vocation, he saw that the party separated in different quests, and only the man and woman with the wallet remained. They stood gazing for a few moments, and then marking the numerous bodies lying around the spot where the page was seated with the wounded Knight's head in his lap, they made towards it.

"Stay," said the female, laying her hand upon the man's arm. "Best reconnoitre yonder heap of carcasses; methinks I see some one moving."

The moon at this moment withdrew her light for a moment, and the pair were at fault.

The page set the Knight's head gently on the ground, and seizing a shield which lay beside him, arose and drew his sword, placing himself firmly before his charge.

"Ha!" said the ruffian, "I can now see some one standing amidst yonder heap of slain. Best retire and call 'up our comrades."

"Out on thee for a cowardly hound," said the female: "'tis but one wounded. What else would remain here in this bleak air? Wouldst lose or even share such a booty as yonder spot promises? Come, let me pass if you fear a ghost. I'll soon lay it, I warrant me."

The female drew a long dagger as she spoke, and moved a few paces onwards, followed by her companion, who was now ashamed to remain behind.

"What is it?" he whispered, as they once more stopped, and the moon again threw her light over the ghastly plain.

"Pshaw!" said the female; "come on, I say. Some horseboy who has remained beside the

body of his lord. In, man, and strike him down."

As the man beheld that it was indeed but a stripling he had to encounter, he no longer hesitated, but approached and confronted the page.

The page threw his shield before his breast, and without waiting for the assault bade his assailant stand off.

"Hence, villain!" he said; "seek some other prey."

But the murderous ruffian, still more emboldened by seeing that the youth he was about to encounter was not even clad in armour, vigorously attacked him.

The page, who, it appeared, knew something of the science of defence, received the assault without flinching, and managed, with the help of the Knight's shield, to protect himself from the blows his antagonist, with powerful arm, now rained upon him*, still

* Many of our readers will probably think this encounter somewhat overdrawn; we must, however, beg to observe, that in the middle ages such things were not rare. In the

armour, rendered his defence at best a questionable issue. The blear-eyed ha, the wallet also made the odds more against the youthful champion. She round unperceived by the page, and app

Curiosities of Heraldry will be found the following
"The crest of Dudley, of Northampton, bart., was a ducal coronet, or, a woman's bust: her hair dial bosom bare, and a helmet on her head, with the latch down, proper.' From a MS. in the possession of the family, written by a monk about the close of the thirteenth century, it appeared that the father of Agnes (who in the year 1395 married an ancestor of the D) quarrelled with one Kingsdale about the possession of land, when they agreed to meet on the debateable land, and decide their right by combat. Unfortun Hotot, on the appointed day he was ill, but his Agnes armed herself in his stead, and mounting her horse, repaired to the place of decision, when she su after a stubborn encounter in unhorsing her an

ing him from behind, meditated bringing him down with a stroke of her long poniard.

The youth held his own resolutely. 'Twas like coming between the wounded stag and the doe. There was danger in his true defence, and he bore his rapier point so truly before him, that he even wounded his antagonist and made him give ground. At this moment the hag succeeded in stealing round, and with poniard gleaming in the air was about to put the finishing stroke to the combat and the life of the page at one blow.

The consummation, however, was averted by the wounded noble, who, having been awakened from his deep sleep by the clash of weapons, beheld his preserver on the eve of death.

The sight nerved his arm and gave him fresh strength, and raising himself somewhat from his reclining posture, with his gauntleted fist he smote the fiendish female to the earth.

The Knight had been refreshed by his short repose, and he now succeeded in gaining his

feet, when he immediately hastened to the further aid of his youthful protector, and throwing himself between him and his assailant, with two strokes of his rapier, weak as he was, he brought the caitiff down.

The exertion, however, had been more than he could, in his wounded state, well bear; his wound opened afresh, and he fell bleeding once more to the earth.

The page, uttering a cry of despair, and forgetting his own safety in his anxiety for the young Lord of Folkstone, threw himself upon the prostrate body and again endeavoured to staunch the wound; whilst the ruffian, whose armour had saved him from the Knight's blows, leaped to his feet and approaching, once more raised his sword to smite the stripling. He was interrupted, however, before the weapon could descend upon the head of the devoted youth by a cry of alarm from the female—his companion—who, on gathering herself up to renew the attack, beheld the fluttering pennon of a horseman in full career, scarcely half a bow-shot from her.

The parties had indeed been so hotly engaged that, until that moment, they had not discovered the approach of a large body of horse, nearly two thousand strong, which thundering upon the turf came full gallop towards the spot.

As the ruffian turned at the cry of his companion, he was instantly aware of the circumstance. A single cavalier was in advance of the party which formed the advance-guard, and which, dashing full gallop past the spot, merely lowered their crests as they glanced upon the startled murderer whilst he stood in act to fly. The next moment, as he hesitated, on perceiving they held onwards without pause or enquiry, his ears were again saluted with the thunder of hoofs upon the turf, accompanied by the ringing sound of the main body, coming rapidly towards him.

"Down, Nell!" he said, as he stooped and hastily fled, like some scared bird of prey, across the plain. "Down, I say, and scour off, or you will be trodden into the earth in two minutes." The page, at the same mo-

ment, ran wildly from beside his charge as he caught the ringing sound of the advancing cavalry. He tore off his scarf, and placing it on the point of his weapon, advanced a few paces and waved it in the air, as the foremost file approached the spot so nearly upon him that he seemed in danger of being ridden over by the whole cavalcade.

Suddenly, however, the stately Knight who rode in their front, threw up his right arm, and the word "Halt!" ringing out in the clear night air, the whole mass, their steeds thrown upon their haunches, stood like statues upon the plain. The leader then rode up to the page, and in a few words was made acquainted with the condition in which the young Lord of Folkstone lay.

"Sound out, De Mohun," he said, "and halt the advance, whilst we look to this matter. The young Lord of Folkstone lies here bleeding to death."

Thus saying, Hubert de Burgh, (for he it was who, together with his party, were escorting Prince Arthur towards Falaise,) leapt from his

steed and approached; he found that the wounded man still lived, for the page had again succeeded in bandaging up the wound.

"Who and what art thou, my poor boy," said Hubert kindly, "who hast so faithfully remained beside this youth in his extremity?"

"I am a page of the Daundelyonne," returned the other. "I pray you, Sir Hubert, grant me assistance to gain for this Knight some place of shelter."

"Marry, will I, my poor lad!" replied Hubert. "I would every soldier had so faithful an attendant. But we may not tarry thus upon our march. Here, Robert d'Ashe, and you, Peter le Fauconier," he said to two of his attendants, "dismount. Form a litter with your lances, and bear the young Lord of Folkstone to a cottage you will find on the other side the orchard we just now passed. Enforce a shelter for him there for the night, and inform the Knight of Daundelyonne of his estate at dawn. Desert my old Kentish acquaintance upon the open field in the

dead of night!" he said, after he had sprung upon his steed, and given the word to his men to move on. "No, that's not the place for me. Farewell, good youth. If ever you need a friend, or change your service, seek out Hubert de Burgh." So saying, the knight turned his horse, and striking him with his armed heel, galloped after the departing men whilst the page, assisted by the two men-at-arms, whose steeds he led whilst they waited, turned to look at the still-insensible form of the wounded Knight. They made for the cottage which had been described to them.

The mishaps and adventures of the Knight and his attendant were not, however, over for the night. Ere they reached the end of the orchard, on the other side of which they expected to find the resting-place Hubert had pointed out, they were brought to a stand by an appearance which considerably puzzled the men-at-arms who conducted them. This was no other than a large animal which, in the uncertain light of the moon, seemed a lion or a bear of prey; and as it appeared to

the air on the approach of the party, dancing its body from side to side as is the custom of some animals, it somewhat confounded the men-at-arms, and caused them to halt and reconnoitre it.

This startling object, which occupied the very middle of the road they intended to take, uttered a deep growl as soon as it espied the wounded knight and his attendants, and quietly slunk back within the shadow of the trees.

"What may this be, think ye, Robert?" said one of the men-at-arms. "By'r Lady, I like it not."

"It looked more like a bear," said the other, "than anything else, and yet I heard not of bears in these parts."

"I never saw a bear," returned the former; "nor should I fear a bear an' I did see one; but for yonder rugged creature, I am doubtful it is not of this world, Robert. By the mass, I think it was the foul fiend himself in person."

"I pray you heed it not, good sirs," said

the page, anxiously, "but proceed with your charge, or it will be all too late. Bethink you the knight is sorely wounded, and this chair strikes like death to one in his state."

"It is easy to say 'Go on,'" resumed Robert "but methinks we should do more wisely to fetch a turn and avoid yonder pass; I like not entering the jaws of a wood where I have seen the devil holding a gambol not a minute before. Nay, by our Lady's grace, I can even yet see the monster in the gloom, crouching down in the very centre of the road."

"Nay," returned the other, "methinks I can see some three or four objects there. Look you may see them lying just in the edge of the orchard within the dark shadow of the trees."

"An' I might pass unincumbered," said the Fauconier. "I would take the chance; but to be pounced upon by some evil spirit whilst hampered with a wounded comrade is not so pleasant."

"Nay, then," exclaimed the page, "I will myself go forward with the horses, and take

the first chance. Bethink ye, to remain here is death to us all."

The soldiers, although they partook of the superstitious fears of the age in which they lived, were somewhat ashamed of being thus outbraved by a boy; they therefore took up the knight and proceeded a few paces. The page, however, found it impossible to move the horses a step to the front; they snorted, planted their feet firmly before them, and seemed inclined to break from their holder, rather than approach the wood.

This again startled the men-at-arms, and caused them to halt. "Our horses will not face the evil one," said Robert, "a sure sign I was right, and that the fiend is holding a revel yonder. By the mass, I like it not!"

"An I were mounted, I might find heart to face the fiend," observed his comrade; "at any hazard I could better reconnoitre yonder monster: methinks I should feel more assured if once in the saddle."

So saying, the man-at-arms, followed by his companion, in spite of all the unhappy page

could say or do to hinder them, set wounded knight down, and betook them their steeds.

Scarce had they done so, when some half dozen rugged animals rushed from the co of the orchard, followed by as many ill-looking men in rusty harness, and the horsemen, a ting spurs to their steeds, left the knight a his attendant to shift as they best could.

At first, the faithful page considered the case a hopeless one, and that both himself a helpless charge would in a few moments become the prey of the savage beasts within a few yards of the spot on which stood. As, however, he observed that more hideous-looking monsters were accompanied by several human beings clad in rusty suits of harness, he suddenly recognised them as part of a band of outlaws which had many years infested the woods and fastnesses of the country, and of whose existence he had heard when formerly in Poiteau.

This singular band, who were in the habit of clothing their scouts in the skins of wild

animals, and of assuming all sorts of disguises in their vocation, by their daring deeds, and wild acts of justice against some of the oppressive nobles of the countries they visited, had struck terror wherever they came; and scarce had the page time to recognise the band ere he was surrounded by them.

It was lucky for the pair that the leader of the outlaws was with this party, as they sometimes committed wild deeds when he was not present with them. Meantime, whilst those who were clad in the skins of animals remained aloof, and kept a look-out around, the captain and his small party pounced upon and examined their prey.

"What wounded Knight is this?" inquired the outlaw, "and whither bound with him?"

The page satisfied him in a few words.

"And yourself?" the chief inquired, "who and what art thou?"

On this point the page also quickly answered the outlaw, merely saying that he was a follower of the Daundelyonne, and at the same time entreating the captain to assist him in

conveying his wounded charge to the cottage they were in search of.

"That can I not do, good youth," replied the outlaw, "since I may not put my followers in peril by approaching the town. The names you have mentioned I know; for I am English-born, and I will therefore befriend you in what I can, and take your comrade to our cave. I cannot, however, let you yourself go free: you are our prisoner, and must accompany us."

"'Tis all I desire," answered the page; and accordingly, after he had been blindfolded by the captain's order, the wounded knight was taken up by four of the banditti and quickly conveyed from the field, the page being led after by another of the band.

Not far from the orchard, and somewhat on its left, there was a thick and tangled wood,

"Horrid with fern, and intricate with thorn."

Into this the party plunged, and the page quickly found that after a short halt they were apparently descending into the bowels of

the earth. They were then placed in a boat and were rowed over a small stream, and after a short distance had been gained, they again came to a stand. Here the bandage being taken from his eyes, the page found they were in the centre of an immense cavern, which was only to be gained by narrow openings and outlets so numerous all around, that those who possessed not the right clue would be likely to lose themselves in endeavouring to find the real entrance. The roaring noise of waters proclaiming likewise that the subterranean stream they had crossed presented another difficulty to egress.

In the midst of this awful-looking subterranean hold several parties of the robber band were assembled. A bright fire was alight in a sort of natural hearth on one side, and the place was illuminated by several massive iron lamps, suspended from the over-hanging roof where it descended lower than ordinary, for in some places the rock ascended to so magnificent a height that the eye failed in penetrating its dusky elevation.

On further examination, as the page stood astonished in the midst, he discerned several sleeping-places well filled with dry fern, which he concluded were the couches of the banditti. Into one of these the captain ordered the young Lord of Folkstone to be conveyed, directing that his wants should be administered to.

"Your English John is making wild work here," he said to the page, after he had attended to the immediate wants of the wounded noble. "It is not many of his Norman followers whom I would take so much trouble about as I have even now bestowed on you, Knight; and if I could get the caitiff monarch himself into my dominions here, he should have but a short shrift and a tight cord I promise ye, for all his crown and royal blood."

"Princes are more easily threatened than assailed," returned the undaunted page. "The English monarch is beyond the reach of your vengeance."

"Make not thyself too sure of that, Page," returned the robber; "there be many have sworn to compass the death of

tyrant, and I own myself one of the number. I owe your King a long and heavy debt."

"Methinks, thou art not wise in thus proclaiming your treason to a stranger," replied the page. "Bethink ye, if I were to relate what I have just heard on my return to Court, the vindictive King would scarce rest till he had smoked your band out of this nest, as they smoke wolves from their dens."

"How know ye, bold Sir," returned the outlaw, "that thou wilt ever return? Look around thee here. Once fairly trapped in this cage, and even if life and liberty were offered thee, without assistance and guidance thou couldst never more regain the open world above."

"But men speak thee fair," insinuated the page, "and call thee good in all but thy vocation. I have heard thy name sounded in other lands, and have even lived with those who have known thee in former years. Thou art the robber-chief whose name has struck terror to the wicked, through all France and Normandy."

"Thou art right, my poor boy," answered the chief, "and, in sooth, I would not harm either thee or the knight thou servest, since his name is known to me, and the place he dwells in is familiar to my eye. I am Saxon-born, and it does my heart good to hear the pure English you speak. But come, 'tis ill talking with one whose spirits are wearied with toil and fasting; we will find thee supper and a bed."

"And how then," said the page, as they moved towards the fire, to take their place at a table which some of the outlaws had spread for the captain, whilst he held converse with his youthful guest, "And how then hath our English king so deeply wronged thee?"

"By dishonouring my house," said the outlaw; "by taking from me the light of mine eyes: my wife he took to be his favourite, my children he caused to be destroyed, my possessions he confiscated, and myself he banished from my native land. Nay, my very name, which was a knightly and noble one, ere his Norman ancestor brought his followers to England, has become, like that of

all true Englishmen, a scorn and a reproach; my family have been hunted, disgraced, and persecuted like the reptiles of the field for many generations, and now this vile John hath filled the measure of our wrongs. But mark me, youth," continued the outlaw, "you will live to see this despicable tyrant abhorred and accursed through all Christendom during life, and die the death of a poisoned hound at last. But enough of this," he said, repressing his emotion, as he seated himself at the rude table on which the repast was laid. "Thy bright English face and brown locks have reminded me of my deep griefs. Bring wine and fill," he continued, speaking in French to the attendant who waited; "and now, Sir Page, let us eat and fear not. 'Tis not often I am favoured with a guest from the white cliffs I love so well. 'Here's to the fair and fertile land of Kent,' from which you say your Lord last came. Nay, heed not the young knight yonder; we have those in our band well skilled in leechcraft, and if he is not too badly wounded, depend upon their care and attention." The chief now busied himself in assist-

his host that he would altogether re-
hood which had partially concealed h
and it was an assurance to him of
faith of his entertainer, that the re
not altered into a command. Ne
what the bandit could observe of th
his guest seemed so much to interest
his gaze was often fixed upon the boy
nance for several minutes at a time.

At length, he arose from his
whilst winters of memory seemed to
his mind, paced up and down the car
stopping to contemplate the page as
nued his repast.

“ A follower of the Daundelyonne
musically “and have you long so

"And thy name?" inquired the robber.

"Call me Chalamor," said the page; "that is the name by which I am at present known."

As the outlaw saw that the youth disliked his close scrutiny, he forbore the conversation, and suffered him to finish his meal without further question. In short the page found himself in better quarters than he could have hoped for, and whilst he refreshed himself at the captain's board, could not but admire the regularity and order with which the band seemed to be managed. Parties ever and anon came and went, scouts in most fantastic habits continually brought messages, and made report of proceedings without, whilst others in the disguise of peasants, were despatched on various missions by their chief.

The recent siege of Mirabeau by the army of Prince Arthur, and the wild contention and discord attendant upon it, had proved a rich harvest for the outlaw chief, whose band was so numerous and well organized that they held posts and detachments in various parts of France, Normandy, and Brittany, besides

their present haunt: so that when they found one part growing too hot to hold them, they not unfrequently disappeared in the most unaccountable manner, and as suddenly commenced a fresh campaign in a far distant quarter. It was somewhat curious, that at this period the virtues and noble qualities, wanting amongst those in authority, were often exercised by men who were without the pale of "worshipful society." The knightly chieftain, whose crested helm and blazoned bearings had proclaimed his renown, even on the burning sands of Asia, and whose gallant form and feats in the listed field, made him the cynosure of bright eyes, was yet, when on his own domain and barony, oftentimes little better than a common robber,—an oppressor of the poor serf who dwelt beneath his castle walls, an extortioner, a cruel task-master, and even a remorseless murderer. The bold outlaw, again, in some few instances, and who, by tyranny and oppression, had been forced to the very acts of retaliation which placed his life a forfeit to the laws, not unfre-

quently became, in his character of a wild and lawless freebooter, a scourge to those from whom he had suffered wrong,—a friend to the oppressed, and, after his own wild fashion, a dispenser of justice and benefit amongst the poor.

Guichard of Poicteau, as the robber-chief was called, was as well known in France and Normandy at this period as Robin Hood in England. He was, in fact, a Saxon of good descent, whose ancestors had dwelt on the shores of Kent. The deep injuries his family had experienced at the hands of the Normans for many years, ending in the abduction of his young and beautiful wife by order of King John, whilst on a hunting excursion in his neighbourhood, had made him an outlaw and an exile from his native land. Possessed of valour, conduct, and prodigal generosity, he quickly succeeded to the command of the banditti he had joined when he fled from Britain to Poicteau.

Having suffered persecution he had learned mercy, and, as far as it was possible, managed

to restrain and curb the before-unbridled license of the robbers he came to command. He professed to make war upon the spoiler to give the oppressor no quarter, and befriend the helpless and needy.

At the present time, hanging upon the skirts of Elinor, who had thrown herself in Mirabeau's way, he had done all in his power to plunder and annoy that "Firebrand of war" as she was called; his band acting in concert with Arthur's little force. On the approach of John, and during the action and capture of the Prince, he had dived into the stronghold we have seen, where he lived like some King of the Mines, in a fairy tale, revisiting glimpses of the moon, with his minions in various sorts of disguises.

As the faithful Chalamor watched beside the couch of his wounded charge on that night in the cavern, he beheld much that interested him. Amongst others who were captives, he saw the ruffian by whom he had been assailed in the open field, together with the hag, his companion. They were brought in blindfold

and immediately taken before the captain of the band.

"How now, my masters," said the chief, as his eye glanced upon the camp-followers.

"Wherefore oppress our nest with offal such as this?"

"We took them, noble Guichard," said the robber, "because their pouches were lined with plunder, and the wallets they carry filled with spoil; and we have brought them before thee, because their hands are red with murder."

"Saw you them commit the act?" inquired Guichard.

"We did," returned the robber.

"And upon the wounded and defenceless?" inquired Guichard; "for that is their vocation."

"We did," again replied the robber.

"Then shall they surely die," exclaimed Guichard. "Convey them hence to our prison in the rock, and display here the booty their vile hands have gathered for our advantage. To-morrow I will judge them."

CHAPTER IV.

THE ASSEMBLY.

A hall, a hall!

SHAKESPERE.

Mad world, mad kings, mad composition.

IBID.

WE have not for some time had occasion in this veritable history to make mention of the fair Bertha Daundelyonne. The swift passage of events have necessarily left us, as well as herself, small time to pause.

The royal leader of the English host, whilst hastening onwards, after landing in France, found so much to occupy his thoughts, that he had for the moment totally forgotten the impression the beauty of the Kentish maiden had made upon him whilst in England, and during their short voyage.

With his accustomed and unbounded indulgence of unhallowed passion, John had divorced his queen, Alice of Gloucester, just before the events narrated in our story, and wedded one of the most celebrated beauties of the age, Isabella of Angoulême, previously engaged to the unfortunate Count de la Marche. Isabella, of whom the monarch was as much enamoured as his disposition permitted him to be of any woman, had joined the royal army from England a few days before; and the King had been too much engaged in attending to the Queen during their hurried march to bestow much thought upon any other woman.

These circumstances had saved the somewhat flighty beauty after their arrival in France from the King's attentions; but on beholding her again in all her charms at the hasty banquet at Mirabeau, his queen being indisposed, and having halted a few days' march in rear, he was again struck with the exceeding beauty of the fair Bertha, and sought, as we have seen, to renew the acquaintance.

The unwearied Elinor, however, had thrown some slight difficulty in his way, for she had commanded the attendance of the fair Bertha upon herself, two of her ladies having died in consequence of their fatigue and alarm during the recent conflict in the citadel.

At the present moment, and in accordance with the fiendlike nature of his disposition, which could revel in the enjoyment of brilliant scenes whilst he was inflicting death and deep misery upon his conquered foes, John, during the short halt he made at Mirabeau, amused himself by giving feasts and balls to the victors by night, and disposing of the numerous prisoners who had fallen into his hands by day; not one knight of the Duke of Brittany's little army escaping death or a prison.

The unhappy Count de la Marche, whose indignation and jealousy had led him to take up arms against the King, together with the Viscounts of Limoges, Thouars, and Lusignan, after their capture were treated with the utmost ignominy. Laden with heavy chains, they were tied in open tumbrils, drawn by

Hocks, and being thus despatched into Normandy, were thrown into separate dungeons. Two hundred knights who had done their devoir bravely in the field, were also in like manner conveyed to different prisons in Normandy and England, where—in a word, to pursue their sad history to the end—they were never more restored to liberty, twenty-two noblemen being actually, by especial order, hurried to death in Corfe Castle.

With the remorseless cruelty of some eastern potentate, John gloated over the misery of his victims, even during those softer hours in which sweet music, brilliant halls, and the presence of beauty might at least to have melted the sternness of his iron heart.

Let our readers picture to themselves a grand assembly, during the circumstance and glory of glorious war, held as it was in the great chambers of the citadel of Mirabeau, within whose walls were to be seen silken splendour, brilliant beauty, revelry, and merriment; whilst the strict watch, the barred windows, the iron guard, the prison, and the

monster death reigned without. What a scene presents itself to our eye as we gaze within that vast thick-ribbed apartment, humming round as it is with arras, decorated with armours and banners, and illumined with lamps which give forth a gaudy light; whilst serving-men bear fruits, refreshments, and rich wines to the guests during the interval of the dance.

Beautiful women are there apparelled in the heraldic devices of the brave, their symmetry and elegance untrammelled by the capricious requirements of modern fashion; the high-born and chivalrous warriors whispering his flattering tale in lovely ears, and stern royalty even unbending in the fascination of the soft hour.

Seated at the upper end of the vast apartment, and a little apart from Elinor, who is in earnest conversation with Blanche of Castile, the unscrupulous John, the greatest fop of his day, in gorgeous attire, holds converse with Bertha Daundelyonne. The King's eager looks, as he plies the proud beauty with flattery, proclaim that he means to succeed in his suit.

The lady, we perceive, is all blushes and indignation. By and bye, however, her suitor appears to implore forgiveness for some heedless word he may have used, for he is really for the moment deeply captivated with the lady's imperious charms; and yet, perhaps, his heart was never colder than at the moment his voice appears to falter, and his false eyes to glisten. What can be more flattering to the haughty Bertha than the low passionate tone in which she is addressed by the dangerous monarch? What more persuasive than his earnest and deferential humility? The beauty almost forgets the language of refusal or rebuke.

When kings condescend to single out an object of notice, it is generally considered fitting to allow them full scope,—no prying eyes presuming to interfere with the royal pleasure. Accordingly, whilst John gave himself up exclusively to Bertha Daundelyonne, the majority of his immediate attendants received their cue and retired, gladly taking the opportunity of mixing amongst the throng. Two pair of eyes,

however, were fastened upon the King and Bertha, from the midst of the brilliant assemblage, which marked their every movement and gesture—the Brabançon Knight, whom we have before seen at the royal feast, and a youthful minstrel of extreme beauty, seemed both deeply interested in watching the fair damsel and her royal admirer.

The Brabançon, indeed, as much as he dared, appeared bent upon catching any word which might fall from the royal lips. He carried his system of espial so far at last, that John, as the Knight passed the spot where he was sitting, slowly arose from his seat and bent so ruinous a frown upon him, that he drew off abashed, and mingling with the crowd, although he still kept watch, suffered himself no more to encounter the monarch's glance.

The youthful minstrel, standing at a more respectful distance, as his foot kept time to the music, appeared totally lost in admiration of the fair form of Bertha, who was not altogether insensible of the admiration she created,

ice her eye, even whilst she seemed intoxicated with the royal attention, occasionally turned his glance.

The King at length observing this, turned an impatient look towards the spot where the youth stood; and after scrutinizing the crowded assemblage, at length espied him.

"Ha!" he said, as he smiled and again sought the lady's eye, "we had almost forgotten yonder springald. But, in truth, I am not altogether sorry to behold him in the presence to-night. Report speaks him possessed of wondrous skill with his instrument."

"Of whom is your Highness speaking?" inquired Bertha, her cheeks suffused with blushes, as she marked the direction of the King's glance.

"Of yonder follower of thine," replied John; "of yonder minstrel, or whatever else it is your fair pleasure to call him. I saw him in a situation of some peril in the field, and am not sorry to perceive that he hath escaped the death which seemed almost inevitable."

The lady Bertha gave an involuntary shudder, and turned pale as she once more glanced towards the spot where the minstrel was standing.

"I would it were my happiness to create as great an interest in that fair breast," continued the monarch, "as yonder stripling seems to do."

"I know not, my liege," returned Bertha, haughtily, "to whom your Highness alludes."

"To yonder handsome youth," replied John. "Nay, by St. Paul!" he continued, as he beckoned to an attendant, "we must hear a touch of the minion's skill. He shall favour us with one of his lays."

But the page or minstrel was no longer to be seen. He had suddenly left the assemblage, or so effectually concealed himself by mingling amongst the throng, that the messenger the King had despatched in his search failed in his errand; and the monarch, with the usual flightiness of his disposition, soon forgot that he had summoned him.

Meanwhile, during the festivity of the hour, matters were being arranged and transacted

which sufficiently marked the spirit of the time and the disposition of the King. Armed posts ever and anon had audience, and delivered their sealed briefs, whilst the ball was proceeding; and orders were issued by the petulant monarch regarding the fate of several prisoners who had been captured, almost at the same time that he whispered his adulation into the ear of beauty.

With the young and gay all was bright, exciting, and joyous. In the blaze of light and amidst the sounds of minstrelsy, the eye of beauty softened, and the heart of the brave were subdued. But amongst the more aged of the nobles present, there was something like care amidst the pomp and circumstance of the scene; and notwithstanding the presence of majesty, it was easy to observe that many of the warriors present felt anxious to discuss those matters of import upon which their meeting at the assemblage gave them an opportunity of conversing upon, rather than to join in the amusements of the hour. Men here and there were to be remarked joining in small

knots, and earnestly discussing together in an unscrupulous and degrading manner in the presence of knights and gentlemen, although enemies who had been vanquished in fair fight, had been treated with respect. The circumstance of the Count de la Marche and the Viscounts of Limoges, Thouars, and Lusignan, together with three hundred knights, having been ignominiously laden with chains and placed bound in open carts to be escorted to their several dungeons in Normandy and England, had given great disgust to such nobles as Salisbury, Warwick, Pembroke, and others. Those grim and stalwart English nobles, when they saw up their huge forms, folded their arms, elevated their eyebrows, as they met together, and gave utterance to their feelings, shook their heads and gave utterance to their feelings, shook their heads and whispering to one another in the ear, as they parted after brief conversation.

Amongst those who mingled in the assembly and appeared the gayest of the gay during the latter part of the evening was Sir John de Brabant, the Brabançon knight who has been before mentioned; and as soon as

King had ended his conversation with the fair Bertha, and he could gain an opportunity of speech with her, he solicited her hand for the dance.

The Brabançon was a witty and insinuating knave, and his conversation highly amused the fair maid of Kent, and he sought to win her favour by every means in his power. So many nobles of higher degree, however, were anxious for a stray smile from the lady, that after the dance, he was fain to draw off, and, as before, admire her at a distance while she mingled amidst the throng.

He stood aloof, therefore, with his finger on his lip, revolving in his mind a hundred different schemes which her beauty had set afloat in his brain. He had seen enough in the early part of the evening to satisfy him as to the royal intentions in that quarter. To his friend and ally, the ambitious Mauluc, he had solemnly pledged his word that he would aid his design of obtaining the hand of the heiress; but as admiration had suddenly ripened into love for the fair object, he him-

self resolved, if possible, after executing the commission entrusted to him by the English king, to win the beauty, either by fair means or foul.

As these thoughts crossed his brain, his eye again caught a glimpse of the handsome minstrel, and he approached him. There was something in the air and manner of this youth, which during the evening had excited considerable curiosity amongst the guests. Even amidst that brilliant assemblage of knights and nobles,—those dauntless spirits, “with ladies’ faces, and fierce dragon’s spleens,” as Shakspeare has described them,—there was a noble bearing about the handsome stranger, which seemed to mark him as above the station he had assumed.

At this period, the joyous science was oft-times adopted for the nonce by the high-born. The troubadours were considered as sacred guests, and were oft-times the cherished friends of the sovereigns of the various countries they visited. The chroniclers of high deeds, they spread the fame of the brave knight from bower

to castle, from camp to court; and through them beauty became renowned, and the acts of the noblest in the world's esteem were wafted across the broad wave.

The minstrel was a stranger to almost every guest in the hall, but knights and nobles smiled upon him as he passed, and bright eyes turned to gaze upon his erect carriage, stately step, and noble features. Amongst others, the stern Elinor, as she sat at one end of the hall, surrounded by some of the higher nobles, condescended to interest herself about the gay youth, and even sent a page to inquire his name.

The minstrel, who had been keenly observing the haughty dame, declined satisfying her curiosity. He claimed the privilege, not uncommon in that age amongst the professors of the joyous science, of passing from hall to hall unknown. He was under a vow of secrecy, he said, and the haughty Elinor was fain, therefore, to put up with this answer, as she declined the discourtesy of compelling him to proclaim himself. All she could gather from

those around her upon the subject was, that youngster had ridden in the train of a Kent knight, then present, Sir Walter de Wingham. Still, however, though the minstrel declined the courtesy of the iron-hearted queen, remained for a considerable space in her immediate vicinity, gazing upon her with no slight curiosity, and revolving in his mind the extraordinary and eventful history of her checkered life.

As he remarked her still beautiful features and regal form, her romantic, unpurged, and wicked career seemed a fit subject for the poet's verse. He remembered how, in the prime of youthful beauty, she had become the bride of a French monarch, a man with narrow ideas, puerility, and bigotry, rendered him hateful to one of her ambitious subjects. How she had led this spouse, with a host of soldiers, priests, nuns, and even wives and children, over the burning sands of Palestine. He called to mind her infamous but romantic acquaintance with the infidel Sultan Saladin, whom she first saw, and of whom she became

enamoured, at a tournament in Asia. He remembered her subsequent divorcement from her French husband, and her espousal with the proud Plantaganet of England, the husband of her choice, the father of Richard Cœur-de-lion, and how she had afterwards instilled the seeds of treason and disobedience against his own sire and sovereign, into the mind of her lion-hearted son. He recollected that this was the **Elinor** whose cruel hand had proffered the poisoned chalice to Rosamond de Clifford in the labyrinth at Woodstock; and whom her vindictive hatred not only urged her to poison, but even to remain and revile her victim, as she watched her death. He knew how she had become the ally of her sometime French husband against her English spouse, and the soul of intrigue and disorder in her own kingdom. He remembered the fifteen years' captivity she had endured, which had failed in softening that iron heart, and her pilgrimage into Germany, at seventy years of age, to endeavour to redeem her lion-hearted

son from his dungeon; and as he continued to gaze upon that stern and relentless brow, he almost admired the undaunted mettle, which now, at eighty years of age, had led her forth the stirrer-up of battle in her native land.

The Queen, however, notwithstanding her sternness of disposition, loved to be surrounded by a brilliant court of ladies. Even amidst the turmoil of war, she considered the affair of love and courtship as no trivial portion of the business of life. She had instituted and presided over a court composed entirely of women, where all complaints against faithless or discourteous cavaliers, and questions relative to sentimental metaphysics, were discussed with the utmost gravity; the decrees of her tribunal, unreasonable as they sometimes were, being published with solemnity and executed with the utmost rigour.

As the Brabançon approached the minstrel whilst gazing upon the assemblage of fair dames surrounding the mother-Queen, he marked the fixed and admiring look which

youth bent upon Bertha Daundelyonne, who was now seated amid the Court of Love.

"A surpassing form and heavenly countenance, Sir Minstrel," observed the Brabançon, "and worthy of your verse. I would give something handsome in the way of largess to one who would furnish me with a sonnet to her smile."

The Minstrel regarded the Brabançon with a look of the utmost hauteur and disdain.

"And who told thee I ever made or sold verses?" he inquired.

"Marry, your garb would proclaim that you make verse," returned the Brabançon; and for the selling them, I can only say I would fain buy, could I get a few couplets to present to yonder lady."

"I am no hireling," said the minstrel, "which is more than many here can say. If I could make a sonnet descriptive of yonder fair excellence, no price which the world could offer would buy it of me."

"She is, indeed, a pattern of Nature's handicraft," replied the Brabançon. "'Tis

pity one so exquisite is of light estimation amongst men."

The minstrel started. "Ha!" he said, "can this be true? Can the form of an angel harbour aught but purity? But no—I'll not believe it," he continued, turning a severe eye upon the Brabançon; "'tis the wicked invention of a scoundrel knave."

The Brabançon was a soldier of fortune—mercenary of the day, owning a ruinous fortress and no land beside; like his friend Mauluc, desperate fellow, whose sword, in turn, had been of service both to the French and English king. He possessed no touch of proper feeling or honour; but he was easy of offence, and never forgot an affront. He started as the handsome minstrel uttered the opprobrious words, and as the youth turned his back upon him and was moving off, his hand closed upon the hilt of his poniard like a vice. One moment's reflection, however, luckily for the minstrel, came between him and his vengeance, or the youth would have rolled a corpse at his feet. Not where Royalty held its court did he

dare to strike; but he drew a long breath as he recovered his calmness, and ere he followed, gazed around him.

It was, in truth, a brilliant scene—

“There to the harp did minstrel sing;
There ladies touch’d a softer string;
With long-eared cap and motley vest,
The licensed fool retailed his jest.
His magic tricks the juggler plied,
At dice and draughts the gallants vied;
While some in close recess apart,
Courtèd the ladies of their heart,
Nor courtèd them in vain.”

It was in vain, however, that the Brabançon knight sought to reason himself into the propriety of restraining his anger till a fitting opportunity presented itself of gratifying his resentment at the insult he had received,—an affront he need not have taken to himself, but that he felt the epithets used exactly suited his particular case. He accordingly wound his way amongst the guests till he again found the youth, when with sullen demeanour he dogged him up and down the room like a murderer.

The minstrel, as our readers will have doubtless already perceived, bore so great a

resemblance to the youthful page of the Lady Bertha Daundelyonne, that it was almost impossible to distinguish which was which; and as it happened that neither of them had ever met together in the same place, a number of mistakes had occurred. The youth, to all appearance, was not more than seventeen years of age, possessing a form and face of exceeding beauty; though those who looked closely into his countenance, might have seen that his disposition, although sweet as summer when unopposed, could be violent as an undammed torrent if thwarted or angered.

As the burly Brabançon, with folded arms and flashing eye, stalked after him, the youth became suddenly aware of the annoyance; and turning, bent so stern an eye upon the knight, that he fixed him like a basilisk.

"Have you any trade with me," he asked, firmly, "that you thus tread upon my skirts?"

"Ere I answer that question," returned the Knight, "I would fain know to whom I speak."

"What is my name to such as thee?" returned the youth. "I see the dragon embroid-

ered upon thy coat, and therefore take thee for the hireling whom men call Raoul of Brabant; but I neither know, nor wish to know thee."

"Raoul of Brabant, nevertheless, must know more of thee," returned the Brabançon, "and that ere yonder moon we see through the casement pales in the morning light. Thou hast offered me a deep insult, boy; and if thy lineage proclaims thee worthy of my chastising arm, thou must feel its weight. I demand thy name ere we part."

"When I have achieved one thou shalt have it," replied the youth. "Meanwhile, we talk here in the haunt of men. Wilt meet me five minutes hence in the pleasaunce beneath the north tower?"

The Brabançon was struck with the ready and quick spirit of the youth. He even felt cowed beneath his fierce eye; not that the Knight wanted courage—few men did so in that iron age—but he was a cautious person, and somewhat jealous of involving himself openly in a duel with a youth so distinguished in appearance, and whose name he knew not.

To have him dealt with by proxy, or even to smite him from behind a buttress, would be more to his taste. He therefore paused, and pursued considerable caution in following the hot-headed lad from the apartment.

From what he had that night seen, however, the Knight felt that, in this youth, he had a dangerous rival with the Lady Bertha Daundelyonne, and he resolved, in accordance with the unscrupulous practices of men of his profession, one way or another to put the lad to silence.

Taking his way to the lower apartment of the castle, he passed under the arch of a small tower which led to the pleasaunce, and mingled amongst the crowd of menials, servitors, and men-at-arms, who filled the lower offices of the building during the riotous license consequent upon the castle's occupation by the King.

As he passed amongst the crowd, he encountered and recognised the attendant, De Bossa. This ruffianly companion, who, with several of his fellows had been drinking potations pottle-deep at the buttery, was an old acquaintance

of the Brabançon, having indeed formerly ridden in his troop, where he was known, even amongst the dissolute fellows who, at that time, served under command of the redoubted Raoul as "Bossu le Mauvaise."

As the ruffian was under some obligation to his former leader for the vile character which had recommended him to the service of King John, the Knight suddenly thought he might make use of him in the present instance. He accordingly favoured him so far as to stop and renew the acquaintance. The Bravo was at this moment, in his own opinion, fit company for an emperor, seeing that he was three-parts drunk.

"Ha," he said, "most noble captain, may I never sip hippocras again but I am right glad to recognize you."

"The very man I most desired to meet," returned the Knight. "I pr'ythee step apart with me here; I have a commission for thee which shall fill thy pouch to-night."

"Gramercy," said the ruffian, "'twill not be the first time my arm has won a purse from

thee. But who is to be dealt withal? *Mind* thee, Sir Raoul, I am in royal pay at present, and cannot undertake anything beneath *what* a gentleman of condition ought to engage in."

"Hark'ee," said the Brabançon, when they had emerged from the dark postern of the tower, "I am invited forth here to-night by an unknown youth:—to be plain, at the present moment I neither want the hazard *nor* the éclat of such a matter. At the same time, my interests require that my opponent should be out of the way. Do thou, when we engage, come upon him behind, throw thy cloak *over* his head, and with thy giant strength *hurl* him from the parapet into the moat."

"Enough," cried the Bravo; "go to, *I* understand thee, and will to thy assistance *at* the first clash of weapons."

The Brabançon on this understanding immediately passed into the pleasaunce, and a few minutes' walk brought him to the spot where the Minstrel was in waiting.

"You see I have accepted your invitation,"

observed the Knight, "although I neither know your name nor lineage."

"It is well," returned the youth; "the disgrace of the encounter, if any there be, will be endured by me, since he who vilifies the fair fame of a lady deserves merely the hangman's cord. Thou hast cast aspersions upon one whom I profess to worship, and I will in this instance myself chastise thee."

"Gramercy," said the Brabançon, again taken aback at the youth's impetuosity, "this springald will bear us all out of the field anon."

The rays of the moonshine, which reduced all around to patches of pure silver-white, or dark and distinct shadow, the unbroken outlines of which were hard as iron, rendering the trees and shrubs of the pleasaunce in a hundred fantastic shapes, gave the combatants plenty of light for the encounter.

The Brabançon knight was in no hurry to commence; he looked anxiously into the dark shadow of the buttress of the tower beside which they stood, for the ally he expected.

But the youth gave him small time for consideration, and dropping his cloak attacked him vigorously the moment he had drawn his sword.

The Brabançon was a good swordsman, but he quickly found himself no match for his more mercurial antagonist, and notwithstanding his superior strength, he was twice wounded in as many minutes; so that, growing enraged, he endeavoured to rush upon his foe and cut him down with furious blows.

At this moment the Bravo stole up, and approaching the youthful minstrel from behind, was about to seize him at advantage in his powerful gripe, when he immediately recognized him, and paused for a moment. He then suddenly drew his blade, and thrusting himself between the combatants endeavoured to separate them by striking up their weapons.

"How now, my masters?" he said; "know ye not the danger of settling private quarrels so near the royal apartments?"

"Come not between us now, good Bossu,"

said the enraged Knight; "stand back, till I have chastised the insults of this malapert with my own arm."

"It may not be," replied the Bravo; "I have good reasons for not permitting the boy to be hurt."

"Hence, hound!" exclaimed the page, "and take thy interference where it's needed, amongst thine own drunken fellows in the buttery. Stand from between us, or, by heaven! I will pierce thee with my rapier's point."

The ruffian laughed aloud, as he again sought to pacify the combatants, a matter however he found it impossible to effect without drawing both their weapons upon himself. At length the altercation became so violent that a party of the castle guard, making their rounds, suddenly pounced upon them; the Bravo effecting his escape as both the combatants were captured and carried off to the court of guard.

Queen Elinor was extremely particular in all the etiquette of a court, and although she never permitted herself to be approached by

her knights and nobles unweaponed, she visited all private brawls, and even the drawing of a sword within the precincts of her quarters with the utmost severity. A report was accordingly made to her of the encounter which had just taken place almost beneath the windows of her chamber, and the combatants were immediately ordered to be confined in separate dungeons for the night. Meanwhile the Bravo, who in virtue of the offices he was in the habit of performing for the King, could at most times gain an audience, as soon as the monarch withdrew from the assemblage, sought an interview in order to apprise him of the circumstances. Indeed it was one of John's peculiarities to have everything that happened in the vicinity of his residence vigilantly spied into. Like the Scottish Thane, there was scarce a noble in his realm—

“ But in his house,
He kept a servant fee'd.”

When, therefore, the monarch was informed whilst he doffed his ball costume and assumed an easy robe, that this respectable functionary

craved a few minutes' audience ere he retired to rest, he ordered the Bravo instantly to be admitted, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, and the "shag-ear'd villain" the next minute stood in the presence.

"How now, sirrah?" said the King, "is there treason afloat to-night, that you think fit to approach us with so hideous a countenance at this late hour?"

De Bossu, who, according to his usual custom when admitted to an audience, stood with downcast eyes until his master addressed him, upon this raised his eyebrows and showed his teeth, executed a most ghastly grin as he replied,

"Your Highness gave me charge respecting a certain page," he said.

"Ha!" said John, "we now remember as much, though the hurry of events had driven the circumstance, together with other matters appertaining, from our memory; but what of that, good Bossu? I saw the blooming Gany-mede but lately in the hall to-night. Thou

hast kept a sure eye, I find, upon ~~your~~ charge."

"Gramercy," returned the Bravo. "It would puzzle half a dozen servitors to ~~keep~~ that youth, or whatever else it is your Highness's pleasure to consider him, in view for any length of time. Saving your royal pleasure, the keeping of that page's throat from being slit hath given me more trouble ~~than~~ would the cutting of half a score of weasands."

"How so?" said the King, "the stripling ~~seems~~ seems gentle as a young fawn."

"Your Highness will, notwithstanding, understand that the creature is a perfect mystery. One moment all timidity, modesty, and retiring diffidence, and the next all impatience and hot valour. I saw him in the train of Sir Walter de Wingham during the battle of Mirabeau, performing deeds that would have graced the best lance in your Highness's army."

"You surely dream," said John. "The

page I gave you instructions to keep an eye upon was, I understand, for the most part of that day in rear with the women and baggage; the only time he was in the *mêlée* was whilst delivering a message from ourself, what time Lord Folkstone brought him into the field."

"Well, my liege," returned the Ruffian, "be it as it may—under favour, I speak—this piece of incomprehensible waggery, it is my duty to inform your Highness is just now laid by the heels."

"Ha!" exclaimed the King, "how mean ye by that, sirrah?"

"Marry," replied the Bravo, "your Highness must know that, being full of valour as a young weasel, the lad fastened a quarrel upon Sir Raoul of Brabant, and the two have been taken in the act of brawling in the precincts, by the Queen's guard, and clapped into a dungeon by her especial orders."

"This must be immediately looked to," said John, "our mother's somewhat antiquated court of love must not be suffered to interfere with

our own affaires de cœur. The matter must be righted at once, good Bossu. Sir Raoul of Brabant is especially employed in our service and we would not at present that even the other culprit should come under our mother's wrathful judgment for this offence. Look ye," resumed the King, after a short pause, "bear this, our signet-ring, to the officer of the Queen's guard. Bid him release the prisoners you have mentioned, and we will ourselves bear him harmless. That done, give Raoul de Brabant a hint to depart without delay upon the mission already entrusted to him; and do you yourself see the page lodged in the wing of the castle appropriated to the attendants of the Queen-mother. You understand?"

"In the quarter appropriated to her Highness's ladies?" said De Bossu, inquiringly.

"You heard our order, sirrah," said the Monarch, "begone!"

The Bravo withdrew to execute his mission, and the King prepared to address himself, after completing his change of costume, to an adventure he had that night resolved upon

whilst present at the ball, which was no other than a visit to the apartment of Bertha Daundelyonne.

"This haughty Saxon beauty," he said, "contemns our suit; she has escaped me once, but to-night I will woo her like a soldier."

Whilst he spoke the Monarch took the lamp from the table, and leaving his apartment, sought the wing of the castle in which the lodgings of Queen Elinor's attendants were situate.

CHAPTER V.

THE CAPTIVE AT FALAISE.

It is the curse of Kings, to be attended
By slaves, that take their humours for a warrant
To break within the bloody house of life.
And, on the winking of authority,
To understand a law.

SHAKESPEARE.

IN a small chamber of the strong castle of Falaise sat a lad of some sixteen years of age. In his countenance were to be seen traces of the deepest dejection; whilst, so variable are the feelings of youth, in the hollow eye and ghastly countenance, a wild and almost insane expression might have been observed, as some faint ray of hope illumined his features. It was Arthur of Bretagne, who had now been for some weeks a close prisoner at Falaise. But in that short time, how changed was the beau-

tiful youth from what he had appeared when he was first captured at Mirabeau.

The apartment in which he was at present confined was a small chamber in the eastern tower of the castle. The walls were of immense thickness, rendering the inmate as secure from all escape or rescue, as the living reptile we sometimes find entombed in the heart of the quarry. Whilst the inner flanking wall, which on this side the keep rose full twenty feet in height, and was reared scarce ten paces distant, excluded the slightest glimmer of sunshine, through the narrow embrasure constituting the sole window of the apartment. Dim and gloomy was the aspect of the interior, cold and deathlike was the feeling it conveyed to the inmate. No companionable fire cheered the lonely hour ; one worm-eaten heavy oaken table, and the chair he occupied, together with a low truckle-bed, forming the accommodation of a prince. Alone, in gloom and despair, with no possible amusement to beguile the heavy time ;—ill, without an eye to mark his grief, or a single human being to care if death.

ensued ; dreading the coming night, which increased the horrors of his captivity, the unhappy Arthur felt already a foretaste of the grave. He suffered even before death the horrors of a living tomb. Murder ! withered murder ! was in his fearful thoughts.

To the student, the excursionist, and the antiquarian, how delightful to ponder over the ruined chamber, the falling tower, the flanking wall, and the mouldering keep. How sweetly the balmy air recommends itself as we stand upon the moss-clad fragments, and gaze around at the venerable ruin and its surrounding scenery,—the castle lake, the forest glade, the wild chase, and the noble park. And yet how few, whilst in the enjoyment of health and freedom, in such vicinity, pause to consider the hopeless and miserable waste of years some captive has sighed out in darkness and despair, ere time burst the cerements which enclosed him, and made beautiful to succeeding eyes what, to him, conveyed but horror ; and whose only escape from which was through the jaws of death.

Sharp misery had already worn the form of the noble and high-spirited Arthur, and in his countenance were to be seen traces of cruel disease consequent upon the sufferings he had endured. An unnatural lustre burned in the eye, which glistened in the murky vault in which he was confined. His haughty bearing and noble carriage were almost gone. His high spirit was evidently failing him. The horrors of torture were upon his mind during the day, and disturbed his sleep by night.

In a few short weeks every slight particle of hope had been gradually removed. Successive orders from his unnatural uncle had increased the strictness of his captivity, had changed his lords and withdrawn the few indulgences the humanity of Hubert de Burgh had in the first instance insisted upon giving him. Nay, even now a lower depth awaited his misery, and, although entombed in the strongest and someliest apartment of the strong keep of the castle, a deeper dungeon, a more dreadful prison-house, was in prospect ere he was consigned to the grave.

There was at this moment one other in of the castle of Falaise, who, although in possession of liberty, health, and power almost as wretched as the miserable tenant of the prison above which he dwelt, and this was the soldier to whom the safe custody of the unhappy Prince had been consigned, Hubert de Burgh.

To this highly favoured statesman, warrior, council and brave in the field, were some entrusted commissions which almost showed his allegiance.

On first bringing the young Prince to Falaise, Hubert, although his orders had been strict and severe in regard to the custody of so important a charge, had ventured to grant the youth every indulgence in his power consistent with his safe keeping. He had himself seen, as far as he dared, to the fort of the unhappy Arthur; lodging him in an apartment of the fortress somewhat suited to his exalted rank, whence, although from his giddy height and strongly-barred door and windows there was no chance of escape.

from which the captive could at least see the beauty of a world from the enjoyment of which he was for ever excluded.

This indulgence had, however, been suddenly noticed and consequently forbidden. Spies had reported to the vindictive John that the jailor and his captive were growing attached to each other; insinuating that the noble and winning boy might possibly so far gain upon his keeper's heart as to shake his allegiance and win him to his side. In truth, the dark-minded Mauluc had been exercising his function, and had made such a report of proceedings as consorted with his own evil disposition. The King, therefore, who was satisfied he could not find a custodian for the young Plantagenet of more assured faith than the trusty Hubert, had insisted upon the prisoner being kept in closer captivity, and had at the same time expressed his disapprobation of the intimate terms on which the captive and his jailor lived.

Still, although Hubert was fain to obey his royal master, he found it difficult to sequester

himself from the unhappy Prince, and he still tended him with care and attention in the narrow prison-house to which he had been consigned.

The grief this companionship caused the humane jailor, and his apprehension of the probable fate of one so young and interesting had affected his health, whilst the noble-hearted boy, in the most affectionate manner and with the tenderest solicitude, sought to sooth his grief as he marked his failing spirit and aching brow,

“Saying, What lack you? or where lies your grief;
Or, What good love may I perform for you?”

The dreadful anticipations of the unhappy Hubert were indeed but too soon realized. An order one day arrived from the King to transfer the prisoner into other keeping; the knight who bore this order signifying to Hubert that, although he himself was to refrain from all intercourse with the Prince, he was yet to remain in command of the castle, allowing neither ingress nor egress for twenty-four hours from its receipt.

The knight, who was indeed no other than our old acquaintance Raoul de Brabant, was accompanied by two evil-looking companions; men, who appeared uneasy in the light of day, cased as they were in harness and their countenances half-sheltered within the hollow of their casques.

This was a severe test to the truth and loyalty of Hubert. At one moment he almost resolved to tamper with the King's messenger, and, at the almost certain chance of recapture and death to both, endeavour to escape with the young Prince. A moment's reflection, however, dissuaded him from this course, and he saw it would be now too late.

"Why is this?" he demanded wildly of the Brabançon, as he stood with the King's mandate in his hand. "Wherefore this alteration? The Prince is safe, and secure in my charge."

"Nay, Sir Hubert," replied the Brabançon, "it is not for you or me to ask the why or the wherefore of our orders. I bring you my commission from the King; it is for you to obey it,

mpact. At present, I beg the favour of the
ys of the Prince's chamber."

It was some small relief to Hubert to gain
ren this assurance; but the character of the
ew comer, the men he had with him, and the
association of Mauluc, but too plainly showed
im that some foul and butcher-work was
ither then to be enacted, or in anticipa-
ion. He struck his clenched hand upon
is forehead; then hastily seizing the keys
at his girdle, which admitted to the wing of
he castle where the Prince was confined, he
lashed them with all his force against the
stone walls of the apartment, and rushed out
upon the ramparts to cool his heated brain.

"Methinks, you have passed your word to
ronder Chamberlain somewhat rashly," ob-
served Mauluc. "How know you that our
charge will survive the trial he is to undergo?"

"I have also passed my word to one mightier
than Hubert de Burgh," returned the Braban-
pon; "let that suffice, good Walter. Methinks,
you have become over-scrupulous of late."

"Not a whit," replied Mauluc, "but I know

Hubert de Burgh more intimately than you seem to do ; and take my word for it, good Raoul, the stout Englishman is not one to break his oath."

"Well, be it so," answered the other ; "I mean not to come within the danger of his wrath. I have promised not to practise on the life of the Prince ; neither will I. You know how far my commission extends ; trust me, I will not exceed it. John's last words were, to avoid extremity."

"I marked the order," said Mauluc ; "and well I knew—because I know the man—what such a caution really meant."

It was in the after-part of the day when these two worthies and their attendants had arrived at Falaise, and, after conferring for some time on matters apparently of deep and dangerous import, to judge from the low and earnest manner in which their conversation was carried on, that they descended to another and more secluded apartment of the castle. Here they ordered refreshments to be brought, after which they gave audience to the two ill-favoured

attendants they had brought with them, and remained in secret conclave till the shadows of night began to descend, and the bat flitted about the walls and towers. Meanwhile, the troubled Hubert, hour after hour, continued to pace the battlements. It was in vain the soft evening breeze fanned his cheek, and the moon silvering tower and turret shed a flood of light upon the surrounding scene; a dark cloud was upon his soul; a horrid presentiment of something dreadful seemed ever present to his imagination. Unwilling as he was to entertain conjecture of the exact deed his fears obscurely foreshadowed, the picture of a fearful scene likely to be enacted, or perhaps at that moment in progress, was ever before his eyes.

The apartments Hubert tenanted in the fortress were just above the chamber he had first appropriated to his prisoner. The Prince, as we have seen, had been removed by royal order, to closer confinement, and now tenanted the small chamber the beginning of this chapter has endeavoured to describe; and

strong as were its walls, a man-at-arms was stationed night and day on the outside, beneath the iron-grated loop-hole which admitted the breath of heaven. As Hubert walked the giddy rampart, he ever and anon paused and started at the slightest sound passing upon the breeze. For some hours, however, nought but the measured tread of the different sentinels, and the clatter of their arms and harness, disturbed his sad thoughts and anticipations. As the night approached, dark and heavy clouds gradually rolled over the sparkling vault, and obscured the moon's light.

One heavy, black, and portentous mass hanging like a huge bird of ill omen, seemed to extend its wings directly over the donjon-keep. It remained stationary for a few minutes, as if to hide the building from the open world; and as Hubert stood with his arms folded watching the gathering gloom, it seemed to growl forth the indignation of the heavens at the unhallowed passions and evil deeds of the inhabitants of the building, bellowing forth a peal of its artillery, which

seemed to shake the edifice to its foundation. The flash which immediately followed was more in accordance with Hubert's present mood than the calmness and beauty of the preceding hour. The grandeur of heaven's wrath seemed in some measure to withdraw his thoughts from the things of earth.

The rain now suddenly poured down in torrents, and ere many minutes had passed, another peal followed, and almost at the same moment, and amidst the loud crash of the thunder, a wailing cry was distinctly heard from beneath. The Chamberlain started at the sound. He listened in breathless anxiety; a piercing shriek succeeded, which was out-tongued by the deep-mouthed thunder. As he continued to listen, the cries were again and again repeated. His heart beat violently, and he sickened as he stood rivetted to the spot. Again he distinctly heard a shriek. He felt his bosom throb, and his chest fill; his hand grasped the hilt of his sword, and rushing down the steps which led to the parapet

beneath, he called to the sentinel posted out the Prince's chamber,—

“What cries were those I heard but he asked wildly.

No answer was returned. He looked the parapet,—the fire-fraught atmosphere of light around. There was no one that the man had been removed. Another and a sound of entreaty, caught his ear as he recognized the voice, he rushed to the steps which led to the inner bastion of the castle, and hastily re-entered the battlements. As he passed through the low portal he gave entrance to the interior at this point he met his esquire, and stopped for a moment to speak to him.

“How is this, Lyonnel,” he said, “the sentinel is removed from before the Prince's chamber? Who has presumed to disobey without my orders?”

“Sir Walter Mauluc gave direction that he should be withdrawn,” returned the esquire.

"By what authority?" demanded Hubert quickly.

"He produced an order from the King," returned the esquire.

De Burgh struck his hands together.

"Haste to the court of guard," he exclaimed, "and bring six men-at-arms to the chamber without the Prince's apartment."

The esquire bowed and withdrew, whilst Hubert hastened to the narrow cell of the prisoner. Seizing a lamp which burned in a niche of the wall along the passage he traversed, he quickly arrived before the chamber next to the one in which the Prince was confined. It was closed and bolted. He struck sharply with the pommel of his sword, and demanded instant admittance.

A voice from within inquired his name and business.

In a voice of thunder he gave his name, with the addition that, if the door was not opened on the instant, he would have it beaten to pieces by the castle-guard, and hang up the sentinel he found on duty.

The man immediately withdrew the bolts, and admitted him.

Before the door of the chamber he found one of the attendants whom the Brabançon and Mauluc had brought with them. The guard at first appeared inclined to hinder him from proceeding further, but Hubert rushed upon him, and dashing him aside, entered the Prince's cell. The sight he beheld there it is hopeless to attempt adequately to describe. The unhappy Arthur was supported in the arms of the Brabançon—he had fainted. Sir Walter Mauluc, in full armour, his visor closed, stood with folded arms beside him, whilst an executioner, kneeling over a sort of brazier upon the floor, was endeavouring to blow the glowing charcoal in order to heat the instrument with which to sear the wounds of the victim.

At first Hubert started with horror at the sight; the next moment he rushed forward and snatched the Prince from the arms of the Brabançon.

In an instant he had comprehended their diabolical instructions.

"My poor boy," he said, as he knelt down and endeavoured to recover the Prince from his swoon, "and is it only by mutilations, such as these fiends have attempted, that you can be permitted to live?"

The Brabançon, who had been disarmed by the cries and entreaties of the unhappy Prince, was nothing loth to resign him to the protection of the Chamberlain. Not so Walter Mauluc. His dark eyes flashed through the bars of his helmet, and as Hubert bent over the form of the Prince, he thus addressed him—

"Sir Hubert de Burgh, I understand not this intrusion. It is contrary to the express order of the King, and must be answered."

"Hell-hound!" fiercely exclaimed Hubert, suddenly starting to his feet, and confronting Mauluc, "wouldst thou further outrage this bleeding innocence? Hence from my sight! Quit the chamber, lest I hurl thee from it headlong. And you, too, Sir Raoul de

Brabant, caitiff and liar as thou art, didst thou not pledge me your word the Prince should receive no injury at your hands? Begone, sirs," he continued, in a calmer tone, as he again turned to the Prince, "begone, and take yonder evil ruffians in your train, or by heaven I will do a deed shall make ye rue this hour!"

"We have warrant for what we do," said the Brabançon, doggedly; "you will not dare dispute the royal order."

"Now, by heaven!" cried the enraged Hubert, "I will resist any—all orders that such vile instruments produce!"

"Has Hubert de Burgh the power or the audacity," asked Mauluc, with a sneer, "to resist the royal warrant?"

"Heed thou not that," returned Hubert; "suffice it, I defy all consequences in this matter. I dismiss ye both from your charge, and I take it upon myself to suspend* your

* According to the Monkish historian, Hubert took upon him to suspend proceedings till the King was further consulted.

infernally cruel upon this youth, till I have myself further communicated with the King."

The two Knights upon this conferred together in an under-tone for a brief space, whilst Hubert, again kneeling beside the prostrate Prince, sought to recover him from his swoon.

At length Mauluc turned and once more addressed him—

"How if we resist your interference, Sir Hubert," he said, "and enforce obedience to the royal mandate? bethink ye, we are three to one here."

"Urge not too far an angry man," returned Hubert; "I have already dismissed ye hence; and by my soul, unless you instantly quit the chamber, I will crimson its stones with your blood."

"'Tis well," returned Mauluc; "my presence shall not longer trouble you, Sir Knight. I return to Mirabeau on the instant."

So saying, he hastily quitted the apartment, and the hoof-tread of his departing steed was

soon afterwards heard in the court-yard of the castle.

Sir Raoul de Brabant also, whose countenance showed some tokens of remorse for the share he had taken in the vile transaction, stole quietly after his confederate, giving the ill-looking ruffian, who had stood like some attendant demon during the foregoing controversy, a sign to follow.

He drew a long breath so soon as he had passed the men-at-arms, who, by Hubert's order, were waiting in the adjoining chamber, and addressed his companion.

"Find your fellow, good Malios," he said, "and get our horses forthwith into the court-yard. I am sorry I ever entered upon this business; it will lead us all into trouble."

"Do we return to Mirabeau?" inquired the ruffian.

"No," returned the Brabançon; "we must put on towards Brittany without delay. I have matters to transact there also, and I foresee this part of the world will be too hot to hold us ere long."

As soon as the assassin had departed, Hubert arose and carefully closed the door of the chamber.

The Prince was still insensible, and, although 'twas a piteous sight to behold the unfortunate youth stretched like a corpse before him, his jailor, upon reflection, resolved not to call for assistance, or apply restoratives towards his recovery. After what had happened, he strongly hoped the Prince would never unclose his eyes again.

This sorrowful reflection suggested an idea to the faithful soldier, which he resolved to act upon, and throwing himself into the vacant chair, he spent some minutes in weighing its practicability. Whilst he was yet deliberating upon this project, the Prince gave signs of life.

As soon as he perceived by a slight convulsive shuddering in the prostrate body, that the Prince was returning to a state of consciousness, Hubert arose and left the apartment, and carefully closing the door behind him, dismissed the guard he had previously ordered

to the ante-room. He then returned to the chamber, and shutting and locking the door, remained for some time immured with his prisoner.

It was two hours after midnight ere Hubert emerged from the chamber. He then again carefully locked the door, and with stealthy pace took his way along the passage and ascended towards his own quarter, by the winding stairs of the flanking tower in that angle of the fortress.

Arrived in his apartment, he again paused to deliberate upon the plan he had resolved on pursuing in order to save the Prince.

"Would that the noble-hearted Faulconbridge were here," he said; "this fearful scene had then been unacted; or, at least, I could have made a better effort to save the Prince. Nay, if the young Lord of Folkstone had survived I should have had an adviser and assistant with whom I could have consulted. As it is, I must undergo the danger of the deception by myself. Eustace de Bellville," he continued, "I might

take into my confidence ; but no, I will not embark one so young upon a scheme of so much danger."

Long and anxiously the Chamberlain sat and pondered. The bell of the castle sounded the third hour ere he could resolve upon the exact course to pursue. He then rose from his seat and drew aside a secret pannel which led to a small closet-like apartment, apparently cut in the thickness of the wall. Into this he conveyed the mattrass and some part of the bedding from his own couch, disposing them so as to make a comfortable bed upon the floor.

He then once more took his lamp and descended to the chamber in which the unhappy Arthur was confined.

Faint and ill as the Prince was, the returning kindness of his only friend—his good Hubert, as he called him—gave him a degree of hope and comfort which for many days he had not felt, and he poured forth thanks and blessings upon his preserver.

The Chamberlain placed his finger on his lip. "Not a word now," he said; "we must be silent as the grave."

The youth shuddered at the word, and shrank back as Hubert stooped and was about to take him in his arms.

"You are not afraid of trusting yourself with me, boy?" he said, somewhat reproachfully.

"Alas, no," replied the Prince, "I were not worthy of your kindness if I doubted your truth, good Hubert; but methinks I am weak and capable of fears at this dead hour."

"You must come quickly and silently, my poor lad," returned Hubert; "believe me, I run a fearful risk in thus endeavouring to serve you."

The opportune interference of Hubert had indeed saved the Prince from losing his eyesight, which dreadful infliction would have quickly followed the horrible mutilations already partially inflicted upon him. As it was, the poor youth was quite unable to walk;

so that when Hubert, after assisting him to rise, endeavoured to support his painful steps, he found the Prince quite unable to ascend the steps of the tower.

Stopping, therefore, after a few paces had been gained, and whilst the groans of the unhappy victim proclaimed his agony, Hubert stopped, and taking his charge in his arms, bore him up the turret-stairs like an infant.

He then deposited him, as comfortably as his situation would permit, upon the couch he had prepared, tending and administering to his wants with the care and attention of a nurse till daybreak, when carefully examining the sliding pannel which concealed the opening, Hubert prepared to leave him to the deep sleep his exhausted condition superinduced.

It was indeed a pleasing sight to behold that iron warrior softened into the watchful and tender nurse; to see the athletic form of the Norman warden bending over the pale face of the invalid; his dark stern features relaxed into an expression of pity as he listened to

the disturbed breathing and murmured horror to which the dreams of the persecuted youth gave rise.

"Unhappy boy," he said, "thy life had perhaps worn out in happiness and unmolested content, hadst thou been born the meanest serf in thine own dukedom; but now, alas! thy dangerous proximity to the crown of England is thy bitterest enemy. Much as I love thee," he continued, as he stopped again to look upon him ere he closed the pannel of the wainscotting, "much as I love thee, my poor lad, I pray to God thy present sleep may prove eternal."

As he gave utterance to the feelings of his heart, the thought struck Hubert that it could hardly be considered a crime were he to be himself the finisher of the deep sorrows of his captive.

"He is but like some poor half-crushed worm in the path of power," he said, "whom, out of humanity, we stamp into the earth to end its torture. Wherefore not at once then terminate the sorrows of the poor boy, and

dismiss his innocent soul to heaven?" His hand sought his dudgeon-dagger as he spoke, and the evil tempter of mankind was at his elbow to back that thought with the suggestions of wealth and power likely to follow so signal a service to his royal master.

'Twas, however, but the wavering of an instant. Under no circumstances could the noble Hubert have stooped to become the butcher of his innocent charge. He carefully closed the secret pannel, and throwing himself into the chair before the hearth, was again for some time buried in deep thought.

The hours passed unheeded as the Warden of Falaise sat in his thick-walled chamber. Visions of future greatness, mixed up with all the chaotic and fleeting thoughts incident to the exciting and dangerous times in which he lived, followed each other in succession, as he pondered over the recent melancholy spectacle he had witnessed. Whilst the wind piped and groaned in the huge cavernous chimney, and he still sat and gazed upon the

expiring embers on the hearth, his gloomy thoughts turned upon former deeds of chivalry, which had perhaps been enacted in this apartment. Thus the night wore on, except the sentinels upon the walls, the Warden of Falaise was the only watcher there.

CHAPTER VI.

AN ELOPEMENT.

The sun begins to gild the western sky ;
And now, it is about the very hour
That Silvia, at Patrick's cell, should meet me.
She will not fail ; for lovers break not hours,
Unless it be to come before their time ;
So much they spur their expedition.

SHAKSPERE.

THE events which had taken place on the night of the royal assembly had been any thing but satisfactory to the fair Bertha. Her pride had been wounded in more ways than one. The King had for the second time, as she conceived, insulted her by his unscrupulous advances ; and her favourite, the page, of whom she had latterly seen but little during the hurry of the march from England, had behaved in an incomprehensible manner on that

evening, inasmuch as he had neither spok~~e~~n to, nor even come near her. To so haught~~y~~ a beauty, this conduct in one so lowly, and whom she had honoured with especial favour, was hardly to be endured. The devoted affection she had all along felt for this singular youth, the strength of which surprised herself, he had indeed, never appeared to return with any warmth; so that, although they had been much thrown together, no syllable of love had ever crossed their lips. In short, Bertha Daundelyonne felt most unhappy on retiring to her room on this night. The expedition in which she had promised herself so many triumphs and so much pleasure, from the fickleness of a little foolish page, she said to herself, had been quite ruined. And yet the boy had never seemed to stand or gaze with such beaming eyes upon her countenance as he had done on that night.

There was another thing which troubled the spirit of the fair maid of Kent—namely, her separation from the protecting influence of the good Knight, her sire. She had never

before been a hundred leagues from home, and the household of Elinor of Guienne and the Court of John were rather startling to a beginner, however much pride and ambition might pervade her breast. With all her faults, Bertha Daundelyonne possessed a warm and affectionate heart. She dearly loved her father, and her having necessarily been separated from him during the hurry of the expedition, rather annoyed and depressed her. She occupied an apartment in the western wing of the castle. It was approachable from the winding staircase of a small tower, which also in its ascent led to other rooms in the different stories; all of them at present in the occupation of the bright ladies constituting Queen Elinor's court of love.

As the drowsy chimes sounded from the citadel, Bertha threw open her lattice, and gazed out upon the dark and frowning battlements and circling walls of the huge castle, in some parts shawdowed black as ink, and in others whitened by the rays of the clear and shining moon.

As her eye travelled over the frowning ramparts, she suddenly heard, in a low apartment, a clear melodious voice singing the following simple ditty, which was one of those lighter lays wherewith the troubadours of the time were wont to relieve their more length-romances. The words ran thus:—

In learning love delights not,
Yet from the fool he flies;
The wise one he requites not,
But with the dullard dies,
For folly, folly, folly—folly must sigh in vain!

His arts are those of pleasing,
His cares are those of bliss,
His toils are those of teasing,
His kindest boon a kiss.
But folly, folly, folly—folly must sigh in vain!

Then wherefore tread the mazes
Of Love's capricious school?
He scorns the pedant's praises,
Yet cares not for the fool!
Sing folly, folly, folly—folly must sigh in vain!

As the lady listened, the voice, albeit its tones appeared more powerful and manly, seemed familiar to her ear, and she thought she recognized it as that of her favourite page.

As the song finished, she was about to address the singer, when he again commenced—

The eye would fain discover
The star which shone above,
But the heart roams sadly over
The bitter fruits of love;
No light to cheer—no hope to raise,
The soul entangled in its maze.

For ah! in rapture scorning
The frown of changing fame,
His smile my path adorning,
I felt no yielding shame;
But now, my thoughts are all of woe,
His pride is quelled—his crest is low!

After these two simple ditties, the singer commenced a sort of serenade, in which, as the lady listened with breathless anxiety, she plainly distinguished her own name.

The voice ceased, and a thrill of delight ran through the lady's veins as she stood awaiting its recommencement.

Had the tones been any other than those of one whom, spite of herself, she loved, she would doubtless have felt indignant at the freedom. As it was, she stood entranced before the open casement in a happy state

between joy and fear—fear, lest the boldness of her serenader should awaken the stern Elinor, whose apartments were just beneath; and joy at finding herself beloved by her favourite page.

Whilst she tarried, hoping for a renewal of the ditty, she heard a slight noise in the chamber behind her, accompanied by a light footstep; and turning round, was only just in time to perceive the figure of a man in the apartment, as he extinguished the light upon her table, and advanced towards her. Her first impulse was to scream aloud. In the next moment, however, the courage and pride of a Daundelyonne rose with the occasion, and she demanded of the intruder his business in her apartment at that hour.

The figure made no answer, but rudely seized her in his arms. At the same moment the moon suddenly shining out shewed her the dark curly beard and pale visage of one of whom she had reason to stand in awe.

The fears which even the presence of a mysterious midnight visitant failed of arousing

in her breast, were instantly called forth at the thought that she recognized in the intruder the unscrupulous John, and she instantly screamed aloud for assistance, endeavouring to release herself from his embrace with all her strength.

Horror and indignation at the attack of the King lent Bertha sufficient resolution for some time to repel him, and dragging herself to the open casement, she again screamed for help, till exhausted, and nearly fainting from the violence of her exertions, she heard, to her inexpressible delight, the sound of footsteps hastily ascending the turret-stairs.

The strong arm which held her in its grasp relaxed its hold at the sound, and the intruder hastily fled through the door by which he had entered, and which led through the main building, as Bertha sank in a swoon upon the floor.

When she recovered herself sufficiently to recollect the perilous situation in which she had been placed but a few minutes before, and to regain her scattered senses, she found herself supported in the arms of the person who had

so opportunely hastened to her assistance; and as a presentiment of his identity flashed across her brain, she hastily parted the dishevelled tresses from her face, and beheld in the clear moonlight the countenance of the favourite minstrel.

His drawn sword, which he had thrown down on his entrance, lay beside him; and as he bent over the lady he whispered words of comfort to her ear.

We have already said that the troubadours of this age were generally regarded, admired and cherished; that they were invited to the courts of the greatest princes, and were the delight of the brave and fair, celebrating as they did the achievements of the one and the charms of the other in their lays and poems. In a word, that the admiration they acquired was so flattering, that youths of the highest rank became strollers and vagabond poets for the nonce.

It would not therefore have been much to be wondered at if the fair Bertha had received with favour the attentions of the hand-

the troubadour who sought to soothe her arm, even though she thought him an utter stranger to her. As it was, she gave herself up to the delight of the moment; and whilst she confessed the obligation she was under to the gallant youth, she half betrayed the state of her heart.

The minstrel plainly saw there must be some mistake in the matter, as the lady, although he had never been in company with her before that evening, addressed words to him which bespoke a former acquaintance.

As, however, circumstances had thus luckily thrown him, at that soft hour, into the society of one so exquisite, and whom, moreover, he had scarcely hoped ever to approach, he felt proportionally elated with his good fortune, and poured forth his vows of unalterable love in a perfect delirium of rapture. He held the fairest form in Christendom encircled in his arm, and as he stood beside her and gazed in her radiant face he felt that

“Not another comfort like to that, succeeds
In unknown fate.”

At length, after some time spent in those mutual vows, explanations, and soft nothings which, to those who love, "seem sweet in every whispered word;" as they watched the approach of dawn the fair Bertha began to recollect that to the most devoted lovers there must come a time of parting. While she bethought her also of many recent transactions which had taken place during her attendance on the Court, she considered it would be best for her to quit it with as little delay as possible. She resolved that it was unsafe for her to remain even for another hour under the same roof with the profligate King. She also knew enough of Elinor of Guienne to be assured that it was useless to inform her of her son's behaviour, and claim her protection, and, as the Knight of Daundelyonne and his train had been despatched the day before with a large body of knights on an expedition into Normandy, she resolved, if she could procure an escort, to follow and place herself in safety under his protection.

With all the impetuosity of his character

her youthful companion volunteered to be her guide and champion; even if she adventured to the uttermost confines of the earth. With others all things, even the most romantic, seem possible, however great the danger and difficulties attending them.

The youth professed himself able to procure steeds, and even the attendance of a serving-man to accompany them, the only difficulty being to obtain egress, as he was in a manner prisoner in that wing of the fortress.

Whilst they deliberated upon this new difficulty, the lady's eye was attracted by a sparkling gem which lay upon the floor of the chamber. As she stooped and picked it up, she found it was a ring of value, and, on a closer examination, it proved to be an ornament she had that night seen on the forefinger of the King, which had evidently been dislodged in the recent struggle. Here then was proof, if any were wanting, of the person and rank of her persecutor.

Her face flushed with anger as she recognised the bauble, and she was doubly resolved

to remove herself from the royal house without delay.

The ring furnished a ready means of doing so, as it was known to the guards, having been used as a pass by the King in various of his unscrupulous nocturnal adventures.

To a youth of the minstrel's fearless and chivalrous disposition, the proposed adventure was fraught with romantic interest, and, placing the ring upon his finger, he prepared to issue forth.

It was resolved that he should procure two attendant and steeds as quickly as possible—and—if the ring was available for that purpose—get them outside the walls of the tower after which he was either to send the serving-man, or himself return and fetch his fair charge.

Taking his glittering blade from the floor he returned it to its sheath. He then bent his knee and kissed the hand of his mistress and the next moment retired from the apartment.

Bertha leaned from the casement in a

state of almost breathless anxiety, as she listened to his receding footsteps. She heard the challenge of the sentinel, and her heart beat violently as she sought to catch the result. To her joy, after a short parley, she found that her lover had again passed on. Again he was challenged, and again he succeeded in satisfying the sentinel; after which distance rendered further knowledge of his progress impossible.

“O love, how perfect is thy mystic art.”

The proud Bertha was completely subdued by the blind God, so that, with the fallacious reasoning of an age, which allowed the high-born to accept the devotion of the lowly soldier, she determined that she neither was about to compromise herself nor her station by thus following the bent of her inclination, and she immediately set about preparing for her flight.

Partially changing her habiliments, she took off the splendid costume in which she had appeared at the ball, and donned her rid-

ing gear. This occupied her but a short time, and she then waited patiently in hope of the speedy re-appearance of her favourite.

Whilst she listened for his returning footsteps, and watched the almost imperceptible approach of the breaking dawn, her thoughts turned upon the hurried events of the few short weeks since she had left her home in Kent, and then she thought upon that home itself, and the happy life she had hitherto led there.

The bustle and whirl of events whilst with the royal army, and the circumstance attending the grandeur of such a power as had beaten the drums and spread their colours through the land, to one of her high feelings had a powerful charm. 'Twas like the reality of one of those high-flown romances she had been wont to peruse in her own hall. But then again, all this splendour and magnificence, this chivalrous pomp and regal pride, had their drawbacks, as we have seen. In her own home she had been the idol of all around; there

queen of that little court she presided over; the wonder of those of inferior degree who dwelt in her neighbourhood, and the admired by all who visited beneath the turrets of her father's castle; whilst during her short sojourn in the royal household, although she had still been the observed of all observers, she had felt herself in comparison but as a drop of water in the ocean. She felt, too, that she had, by her flighty and inconsiderate conduct, lost the friendship of the companion of her youth; one whom, although she had experienced no tender sentiments towards him, she had yet always honoured for his high and chivalrous feelings; and of whom, now he was supposed to have fallen in the recent battle, she for the first time found the real value. Ambition had caused her father to bring her with him. He wished that dazzling star of beauty to revolve in, what he considered its proper orbit. The high-minded and knightly Daundelyonne, himself knowing no guile, in his simple honesty thought not of the

dangers his daughter's beauty might prove in the court and camp of the licentious J. In placing Bertha with Elinor of Guienne, however, he had committed her to the custody of an incarnate fiend, who knew no womanly tenderness of feeling, and whose iron heart would consign her to infamy or the stake for the slightest whim or gratification of him to whom she considered all wills should bow,—her hallowed son.

The contemplations of Bertha were interrupted by the sound of approaching footsteps almost ere she could have hoped for the return of the Minstrel, or those whom he might bring in his stead. She, however, hailed the sound with joy, and looking forth from the narrow window, beheld two figures standing in the garden beneath. Although in the uncertain light of the moon, she failed in recognizing them, however, she thought bore some resemblance to her lover, whilst the other, a taller and more bulky form, she concluded was the attendant he had procured to aid her in

intended flight. The movements of the two figures, as she continued to regard them, confirmed her in this supposition. They seemed fearful of attracting observation from the other apartments in their vicinity, but gliding immediately beneath her own chamber, appeared to be carefully making out its windows. As it had been arranged that she should join the youth so soon as he appeared, or any one he might send, bearing the King's jewel, she immediately descended the stairs of the tower and joined them.

The figures were both in complete armour from head to heel, and as she emerged were on the point of opening the door of the turret. They were both evidently surprised at her appearance, and drew back a pace. No suspicion of mistake, however, crossed her mind, although at a glance, as she approached nearer, she plainly saw that neither of them was her lover; and with the thoughtlessness of one little conversant with the villany of the world, she furnished them with the means of deceiving her.

"You have the King's ring?" she said, hastily, as the taller stranger stepped at once towards her.

"We have, lady," he said, "or we should hardly have passed the guard."

She thought she recognised the voice as one she had heard that very night at the ball, a circumstance that rather encouraged her than otherwise, supposing that both the strangers were friends, and in the confidence of the Minstrel.

"And the horses," she inquired, "are they in readiness?"

"They are, lady," returned the taller figure, "they stand without the barbican of the castle. A short walk will bring us to them after we have gained the court-yard."

"And do you both escort us?" inquired the lady.

"We do," replied the other, "and a whole plump of spears will further ensure your safety."

Bertha made no further inquiry. Dreading that their voices might be heard, and put

herself under their guidance, she hastily descended to the court-yard of the castle, whence they passed the different sentinels, by virtue of some countersign her conductors seemed in possession of, and quickly gained the outside of the fortress.

A few moments more, and she was mounted on a fleet steed, and found herself surrounded by the party who had the charge of escorting her. Ere they started, however, the taller of the strangers took his comrade a few paces apart and held a brief conference with him.

"This is an extraordinary and lucky chance," he said, "a few moments more and we should have been forestalled. The fair Bertha, you see, was prepared for flight. Methinks, I know the upstart who intended to carry her off."

"By're Lady," said the other, "I hardly expected to have been able to achieve the proud beauty without considerable risk and trouble. 'Tis, indeed, a lucky chance, this."

"Make the best of your road ere her flight be discovered, and leave me to put her pursuers

world till I do so. Farewell; and may
your own prosperity depend upon me
in wooing. Be wary and vigilant, as
fortune come to thee: in a week, at
I will myself join thee."

"Not sooner?" inquired the other.

"No," replied the taller cavalier
picion might fasten on me, and I have
Brittany in the meanwhile."

"Depend upon my fidelity, Sir
returned the other, and putting himself
bridle-rein of the lady's palfrey, he
word to move forwards, and the pair
speedily some miles from Mirabeau.

CHAPTER VII.

How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds,
Makes deeds ill done! Had'st not thou been by,
A fellow by the hand of nature mark'd,
Quoted and signed to do a deed of shame,
This murder had not come into my mind.

SHAKESPEARE.

Within this bosom never entered yet,
The dreadful motion of a murderous thought.
And you have slandered nature in my form;
Which, howsoever rude exteriorly,
Is yet the cover of a fairer mind
Than to be butcher of an innocent child.

IBID.

It is not our purpose to paint at full the dire situation of the town of Mirabeau and its inhabitants, while the court and camp of John and Elinor were within and around it. In former days, when war seemed the business of life, the pastime of the great, a town situated as Mirabeau was at that moment; its citizens oppressed with unbridled thousands,

was certainly not in such dire extremity of misfortune as the adverse town given over to sack and siege. Yet still, in all the rude ferocity of the age whilst, fresh from recent strife "the fleshed soldier, with conscience wide as hell," roamed through the crowded streets and thoroughfares, he was by no means a pleasant guest to entertain in a respectable city. The night-shriek disturbed the curtailed sleep, and blessed was the hour when, by "tuck of drum," the greater part of the English army marched forth from the walls of Mirabeau.

On the morning of the departure of Bertha, the town, was, if possible, in a more confused and distracted state than it had been since the horrors of the recent conflict and siege. Large detachments of the English were continually pouring through its gates and thronging and choking up its streets, whilst, at the same time, strong bodies of Brabançons, which had joined the King on his advance upon the place, were now marching out.

John, although he was celebrated occa-

ionally for the swiftness of his movements, and the rapid and extraordinary marches he made, and by which he more than once amazed and discomfited his enemies, invariably gave himself up to indolence and luxury the moment the successful blow had been struck, in place of following up the advantage. He had accordingly, in this latter instance, pursued the same ruinous plan, wasting the precious moments which ought to have been used, in feasting and revelry.

The royal army now, however, was on the eve of departure from Mirabeau. Their destination was Arques in Normandy, before which place Philip of France and his chivalry had just been lying. The royal cortège was to follow with John, who only waited for Isabella, his Queen, to join him, she being expected in a few days.

On the morning of the events we have narrated in the last chapter, the King arose from his couch in no very enviable frame of mind. One of those periodical fits of gloom which so frequently succeeded his more lively feelings,

Since his late success before Mira the capture of Prince Arthur, he elated beyond all bounds, and had his attentions upon the ladies of during the balls and revels he had that town, disgusting and affronting the and barons in his train by the insolent manners and conduct towards their daughters. The re-action of this state of feeling, however, was proportionate. His joy at having so quickly Prince into his power had vanished and on the instant his amusements began upon the senses. "The snake," he "was scotch'd, not killed." Treacher and assassin succeeded to fall in

tented in his apartment for some hours after he arose, so that the attendants, who knew his disposition at such times, forbore to tempt the danger of his wrath by interrupting him. Even the Queen-mother, who had sent to desire an audience early on that morning, had been denied access.

At length, after a long communion with his own evil thoughts, he sent for one of his attendants, named De la Bray, and commanded that no one should presume to interrupt them during the conference they held together.

De la Bray was a soldier of fortune; a brave and honest, although a rough-hearted man, the harshness of whose features, and athletic and somewhat ungainly form, had caused the King to take a wrong estimate of the blunt Norman's character. Accordingly, he thought he could safely confide to him the atrocious business which at the moment lay nearest his heart.

Shaking the gloom from his countenance, therefore, as soon as De la Bray entered, he commenced one of his treacherous orations, and professions of service towards him, and at

length fully expounded the cruel commission he wished him to undertake.

The rough soldier at first either could not or would not understand the full drift of the proposal submitted to him, till at length the King, in express terms, honoured him with full powers to murder the young Duke of Brittany.

De la Bray was seized with so much horror at the suggestion, that he startled the tyrant by his denouncement of so villanous a proposal, and concluded, by positively refusing compliance.

"Your Highness hath mistaken my poor services whilst in your household," he said; "nor do I know to what action of my life I am indebted for so vile an affront. Although poor, my liege, the De la Brays are gentlemen, not hangmen*."

The eye of the King flashed upon the bold soldier with an expression of deep resentment; it then sought the ground as De la Bray steadily returned his gaze, and a pause ensued

* Such was the exact reply William de la Bray returned to John upon his tempting him to murder Prince Arthur.

which was felt awkwardly by both. At length the King resumed the conversation.

"Tis well, good De la Bray," he said; "your refusal has raised you in our esteem. We but sought, in sooth, to try the integrity of your mind, ere we put you upon a service of some little trust and importance concerning the Prince."

"I am bounden to your Grace," returned De la Bray, his haughty and incredulous tone and bearing showing the deep disgust and thorough knowledge he entertained of the King's unscrupulous character.

"Our present conference," continued John, "must pass from your memory, good De la Bray."

"Your Highness need not doubt my truth and loyalty," returned the soldier; "besides I have taken the oath your Majesty proffered me at the commencement of my services."

The King directed a shrewd glance at De la Bray. He saw that he had, indeed, made a wrong estimate of his character, and that in

submitting his infamous proposition to him he had committed himself.

The readily expressed repugnance of the honest soldier had also wrought scruples in the mind of John, and he was tossed with doubts as to the best plan to pursue, and sought to tamper with De la Bray until he could secure him. He, therefore, again affected to treat the conference he had just held as a mere touchstone to try the honesty of the man, and once more hinted at employing him on a service of some import, in the execution of which the association of a friend would be necessary. Summoning, therefore, an attendant, he desired De Bossu to be instantly ordered into his presence, whilst he busied himself in sealing a despatch he affected to desire might be carried to Hubert de Burgh at Falaise.

As soon as De Bossu made his appearance, the King proceeded to give De la Bray his commission, and the soldier, without a word, bowed and withdrew.

As the Bravo followed, a glance of intelli-

gence passed between him and his master. The King's finger was upon his curled lip, and as the recognition took place, he dropped it and pointed to the earth.

The Bravo knew the sign: it was equivalent to the death-blow of his fellow-traveller.

"So," said John, as soon as he was left alone, "my followers grow scrupulous and over-
nice, methinks. By the mass, I must weed all such conscientious knaves from my household, or we shall scarce thrive in these wars. By Heaven," he continued, as he paced his chamber, "a common sworder here, whom we have ourself promoted from the very scum of Normandy to be our own personal servant, dare to boast himself of his gentility, and affront us with his dangerous scruples! Pah, I would have all such ungrateful varlets flayed alive, and their hides dressed up into horse-furniture!"

The good temper of the King was not much mended by an interview he subsequently held with Walter Mauluc, who had just arrived with secret intelligence from Falaise, in which the knight communicated the growing interest the

warden Hubert took in his prisoner. It was this piece of intelligence which had hastened the arrival at Falaise of the parties we have already seen in a former chapter.

The unscrupulous monarch immediately inquired if Sir Raoul de Brabant had yet departed upon the mission to Brittany, with which he was entrusted, and on being informed that some part of his followers had already set forth, and that the knight himself was prepared to leave so soon as he had taken his last instructions, the Monarch desired he might be instantly summoned. It was during this conference that the King threw himself upon the good-feeling, as he termed it, of the two worthy councillors he had called to his aid, disclosing to them his new-found fears, in regard to suddenly depriving the Prince of life, and darkly hinting at other means of unfitting him for rule, by loss of eye-sight and horrible mutilations.

Walter Mauluc instantly undertook the commission, making it a proviso that he should be joined in it by the Brabançon, who had

scrupled at being mixed up in so ical a transaction. The promises of rich l, however, at length, gained the latter o the acceptance of the vile office*.

rdly was the above conference finished— l, the two assassin knights were at that nt making their congé to their employer—the attendant who had before been sum- l, intimated that he had a message for the ch's private ear, and informed him that a Daundelyonne had fled from the

Walter Mauluc stopped short, as his ear t the import of the message, and he l hard at the King.

e intelligence indeed was somewhat ill- for John had given a promise to Mauluc ch, by the bye, he never intended to keep estowing the Lady Bertha upon that wor- s a reward for his many services.

ne of John's councillors, says Ralph, Abbot of Cog- , suggested to the King the propriety of unfitting for rule by blinding and horrible mutilation.

"Did I hear aright, your Highness?" inquired Mauluc; "hath the maiden of Daundelyonne fled from Mirabeau?"

"By our Lady's grace, it appears so," answered John, doggedly, being at the same time half inclined to turn the subject into laughter. "We cannot restrain a roving dame, good Mauluc, by anything but the silken cords of Cupid. Speak out, sirrah," he continued, addressing the attendant, "what is the intelligence thou hast just whispered in our ear? These noble gentlemen are in our entire confidence."

"The Queen-mother greets your Majesty," said the attendant, "and is desirous of an audience. Her Highness bade me deliver privately in your royal ear that the heiress of Daundelyonne has absented herself from the castle. On inquiry it has been discovered that she must have availed herself of the assistance of the unknown minstrel lately haunting the court, who was seen by the sentinels on duty to quit the wing of the castle in which the lady was lodged, after which

himself also passed out in company with attendants, supposed to have been in his train."

"Now, by Our Lady's grace," exclaimed the king, "this is something extraordinary, and we looked to. Hath pursuit been ordered?"

"Hath, my liege," returned the attendant, "Her Highness waits to learn your royal command on the subject, as to the direction most likely to overtake the fugitives."

"What mean ye by that, Sir Knave?" said the king; "do ye suppose us cognizant of the doings of every errant damsel in our court?"

"Her Highness has discovered from the sentinel duty," said the attendant, "that the king had passed by presenting your own private seal."

"What?" said John, glancing at his forefinger, "covering the absence of the ring for the moment?" "Then, by St. Paul, the caitiff must have stolen it from us. Let pursuit be made."

"And for the direction," remarked Sir Raoul of Brabant, "methinks I can aid ~~y~~ou, as I myself now recognize the party I ~~saw~~ before daybreak, leaving the city-gates. ~~They~~ made for the road to England."

"Your Highness will pardon me," said ~~Mau-~~luc, who had looked exceedingly blank ~~during~~ this intelligence, "but methinks my ~~part~~ in the commission you have honoured us ~~with~~, hath become somewhat altered."

"Tush, man," said the King, "we ~~shall~~ recover these foolish runagates ere set of ~~sun~~, depend on't; and if not, the matter is ~~easily~~ remedied. We have other wards at our ~~dis-~~posal, beside this Kentish beauty. The He-~~ir~~ess of Mulgrief, Sir Mauluc, shall supply ~~h~~ place. What think ye, Sir Knight? ~~H~~ possessions are twice as ample, and her fa-~~ir~~ quite as fair."

"The Heiress of Mulgrief," said Maulu-~~uc~~ musing, "might indeed do so; and I ~~hav~~ then your Highness's promise to that effect, ~~i~~ case the lady of Daundelyonne should not ~~b~~ forthcoming?"

"You have, good Mauluc," replied the King; "and now, gentlemen, let me urge you to use all despatch."

"We humbly take our leave," said Mauluc, bowing, "and trust to send intelligence from Falaise that shall completely set your royal mind at rest."

"Use our commission with all prudence," said John; "you understand me? We would avoid extremity in this affair. Adieu, gentlemen; the time will come when I can better show my sense of this service."

A few minutes after the departure of Mauluc and the Brabançon, intelligence was brought to the King that the Minstrel was taken. It appeared he had never left the town, and that having been captured during the preceding discussion, he had been confined by order of the Queen-mother, in one of the dungeons beneath her own apartments.

"Then by our Lady's grace," said the King, "we must deliver the masker from our mother's clutch once more, or she will make short work of him."

CHAPTER VIII.

Mighty power, all powers above !
Great unconquerable love !
Thou who liest in dimple sleek,
On the tender virgin's cheek :
Thee the rich and great obey ;
Every creature owns thy sway :
O'er the wide earth, and o'er the main,
Extends thy universal reign.

SOPHOCLES.

FOR many days the young Lord of Folkstone lay apparently bereft of life and motion. His loss of blood had been great, and from having lain so long in the open field without proper assistance, it seemed more than probable he would sink under the severity of his wound.

An apostate monk, however, who knew something of leechcraft, and who was one of the banditti, attended him in this extremity. But there was one whose careful nursing did more towards his restoration than a whole

fraternity of friars, with all the *Materia Medica* of the time to back them, could have effected. In fact, the greatest danger to which the young Knight was exposed had arisen from the slipping of the bandage which bound up the ghastly thrust he had received, hour after hour, the devoted page sat and watched beside his heathy couch.

It was an edifying sight to behold that stripling's care and attention; and so thought the captain of the banditti, and many of his minions. At times, and for hours together, the page was left alone with his wounded charge, in this dismal cavern, with nothing to disturb the solitude and dark horror of the place, but that which rendered it more hideous; namely, the heavy breathing common to those who suffer from great loss of blood, the constant dripping of the water-drops from the roof, and the subterranean roar of the black stream which rushed through the rocky chasm. A single lamp suspended near the sick Knight's couch, was, at such times, all the light that illumined the cavern. The imagination of

the poor page frequently, at such times, played him wild tricks, and as familiarity with the darkness around enabled his accustomed vision to pierce some of the deep recesses on either hand, it seemed to him that the most hideous and demoniac forms, in all the extraordinary shapes his disturbed fancy presented there, danced and flitted about the rocky labyrinth, and mopped and mowed at him as he sat.

As hour after hour thus passed, and his straining orbs, at times piercing through the gloom, enabled him to see the black roaring tide whose constant rushing threatened to disturb his reason, he almost thought, that maddened by his situation, he could have found relief by plunging headlong into the pitchy stream. What, he thought, if his charge, already nearly exhausted, and struggling with death, should expire in this dreadful cavern! How should he himself be able to bear the thought of being left entombed alone in the bowels of the earth, without becoming frenzied? What if the banditti, in their excursions and predatory expeditions were to

overcome by their foes, and taken, or cut off; how would it be possible ever to escape, even if his charge should recover? Still, the devoted loyalty of the poor page never for a moment deserted him, but hour after hour, and day after day, saw him still tending and watching over the wounded knight.

The dreadful solitude of the robber's cave, however, was not unfrequently changed for a very different scene. After a successful expedition, when the parties returned, there ensued a scene of such revelry and enjoyment, as none but the gentlemen of the shade, the sons of rapine and unbridled license, could conceive or execute.

At length, the care and attention of the page were rewarded, and he saw the young knight in a fair way of recovery. It was then that the solitude of the cavern was exchanged for the companionship most coveted on earth by both, and it became like—

“The Elysian dream of lovers when they love.”

As the Knight reclined upon his couch, with

the white hand of the page clasped own, whilst he poured forth his thanks : devoted care bestowed upon him, the ke of love was not to be deceived, even in dark souterrain. The page of the Bertha Daundelyonne was in truth the girl he had rescued from destruction in land. Her habiliments failed in deceiving young Knight, and she stood—

“ A maid confessed in all her charms.”

Few situations could be more romantic than in which the young noble now found himself. Possessing all the high and chivalrous devotion professed by the knightly and for the softer sex, but which many of the vicious Normans during this reign merely professed, whilst their acts belied such professions, this youth found himself suddenly thrown into contact with the girl whose appearance though so slightly seen, had taken so strong hold upon his imagination, that he had forgotten her ; and as he now again recalled her, having full leisure to mark her extraordinary beauty, it is not to be wondered

he felt deeply and hopelessly in love. To have found this fair creature the tenant of a cottage, whilst engaged in the ardour of the chase, and to have been tended by her when resting from its fatigues, would have been quite enough to have caused most men to have fallen headlong in love. Nay, even to have casually met one so exquisitely beautiful, in the festive hall, amongst his equals, during the dance, the young noble felt would have sealed his fate. But to have saved, and been saved from death, in a manner so extraordinary, and to be afterwards thrown together, entombed, as it were, by the blind god,—was a fate from which there seemed no escape. Escape, however, was far from the thoughts of the pair; and, for the first few hours after the young Knight became certain of the identity of his attendant, the time was spent in pouring forth his thanks for her attention and kindness, and gazing upon a form which to his enamoured eyes seemed indeed—

“Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear.”

Like Imogen in the cave of Belarius,—

although she looked some goddess in disguise, yet she busied herself in making the Robberhold in which she was located, as neat as some lady's bower; arranging the few articles of furniture, and the arms or fragments of armour with which it was cumbered, so as only a woman's taste would have conceived.

Then her neat cookery astonished the Knight, as he lay helpless upon his couch, and watched her graceful movements, whilst angel-like, she sang during her employment.

“ She cut the roots in character,
And sauced his broth, as Juno had been sick,
And she her dieter.”

Like Imogen, too, there was at times melancholy in her tones and countenance, which seemed strangely at variance with the lustre of her laughing eye. She yoked—

“ A smiling with a sigh : as if the sigh
Was that it was, for not being such a smile;
The smile mocking the sigh, that it would fly
From so divine a temple, to commix
With winds that sailors rail at.”

As the young Knight lay thus helplessly

upon his couch, his mind torn with the conflicting thoughts and emotions consequent upon his peculiar situation, deeply did he at that moment feel the misery of being prostrate and helpless. 'Twas not for himself he grieved, but he reflected upon the situation of her he loved, and the danger to which she was exposed, thus imprisoned among a horde of banditti, whose eyes would be as likely to pry into and detect her disguise, as his own. Should such be the case, he trembled to think of the fate of one so young and lovely. The laws of the band, he knew were strict, permitting no female to be resident in their fastness. To introduce a woman into the cavern, except as a prisoner, was death to any one who attempted it, besides being almost certain destruction to the unhappy being so introduced. This regulation had been made from the circumstance of their having been once betrayed by some women who had sojourned with them. Those females, therefore, who became prisoners, were kept apart until they were ransomed, or they were conducted blind-

fold to the upper air ; but under no circumstance was a woman allowed at large within the secret cavern.

Then again, the young Lord of Folkstone was as proud of his birth and station as he was chivalrous and honourable. To wed anything beneath him in station was a dreadful idea. He was one of those who look to antiquity of descent and nobleness of birth in a wife as attributes of the highest consideration.

This it was which had led him to suffer an engagement to be contracted between himself and Bertha Daundelyonne. Her descent from the royal Saxon covered, in his estimation, a multitude of minor faults.

Under these circumstances the young Knight found himself tied down, as it were, to the stake by the blind god, so that he could neither fight nor fly, and his mind was tossed and tormented with ten thousand fears for her he so deeply loved, and alarm for his own firmness of purpose under temptation.

To save the fair creature, thus thrown in his way, from the slightest harm, or most trivial

he would have taken lance in hand, and the united shock of a host of opponents: would have traversed the uttermost parts of the habitable world to serve her; but to marry was fraught with eternal disgrace to the name and house of Folkstone and Goulstone, and to make her his without marriage, grant that he could succeed in such a piece of villainy, after her devotion and service, was quite repugnant to his principles of honour. In short, the young Lord of Folkstone was a pure emanation of a Quixote of his day, a preux chevalier, who ought, indeed, to have lived a century earlier, when errants really roamed about to deliver distressed damsels, who were as often as not to be seen dining upon acorns, and Corin sat all day long playing on pipes of corn, and versing love songs to the fair Phillida.

Banditti were at this time fully employed for the warfare which now raged on the borders, and gave them rare scope for their avocations. Their services, too, were not unfrequently required in the field, it being no uncommon thing for leaders of renown, at that

period to seek the assistance of such troops, and whose captains brought to the field fellows ready for any duty, however hazardous and desperate. Indeed, the horrors sometimes practised in that rude age, even by the regular troops of the baronial leaders when in an enemy's land, were no whit inferior to what was perpetrated by the most savage of banditti. Woe to the poor peasant whose home was situated near the seat of war! Woe to the devoted town in the line of the advancing power! Rapine, murder, and unheard-of brutality, were the sport and pastime of the ferocious man-at-arms when once engaged in war. Not satisfied with the bare slaughter of men, women, and children, the fleshed soldier of the eleventh century was frequently an incarnate fiend, inflicting wanton torture in his mad career. "Some poor wretches," says a chronicle of the times, "were burned in their dwellings helplessly; some, less fortunate, were tortured within them by being hanged up by the heels over slow fires; many were hanged up by the thumbs and beards, with weights of

armour attached to their bodies ; many were starved when taken prisoners. They burned all towns in the adverse fields. They ravaged right and left : to till the ground was to plough the sea. Thou might'st march a day's journey in rear of the advancing army, and find all blackened ruin ; not a man to be seen sitting in a town ; not a hearth to be viewed but on which the inmates lay unhandsomely slaughtered, their grain scattered abroad, their walls thrown over."

Whilst the banditti were fully engaged, and the Knight and his fair attendant left to themselves, in course of time the grievous wound of the former began to show signs of amendment ; but it was long before the invalid could venture to walk about the cave alone. Two individuals belonging to the band were always stationed in the cavern during the night, though their place of repose seemed to the Knight and his companion beyond the dark stream which separated them from the upper world. They generally paid a visit to the interior once or twice in the twenty-four

hours, bringing food and other necessaries, and performing the work of serving-men; carrying fuel, lighting fires; and, by order of their captain, during his absence, they occasionally proffered their attendance upon the wounded Knight.

While thus situated, the course of true love might have been supposed to have run smooth as the gentle current which glides beneath the summer sun. But man is a strange animal, and, unlike the gentler sex, security never fails to beget with him a feeling of carelessness towards the being beloved. Although the Lord of Folkstone was in very truth deeply and hopelessly enamoured of his fair attendant; whilst he felt secure of her reciprocating the feeling of attachment, the sense of her inferiority in station so wrought upon him, that he hardly knew the extent of his passion. The difficulties of his situation in thus having as he supposed, so young and beautiful a creature thrown upon his sole care, tormented him; and under these circumstances, although the livelong day was spent in admiring her

graceful beauty, not a word of love escaped his lips.

At length, one day when the Knight felt his strength considerably restored, he ventured for the hundredth time to thank his attendant for her continued care. "'Tis not long," he said, "ere I shall be enabled to bear the weight of my armour, and then we will leave this dismal refuge, and seek other and fairer scenes."

His young attendant sighed, "It will doubtless be a happy day, my Lord," she said, "when you again see the bright sun of heaven, the glitter of arms, and once more feel the bounding steed."

"It will, indeed," returned the Knight, brightening at the thought. "None but he whose whole soul is filled with military ardour can understand the thrill of delight with which the true soldier beholds his banner spread in the hostile field, and hears the blast of trumpet and the roll of drum."

"And you will no more remember," said the sometime Page, "this gloomy cavern, and

the hours spent in pleasing converse with your poor attendant. That which in after-life will be regarded but as an inky spot, an idle blot in your bright career, will be remembered by me as the bright star in my existence, since I shall consider that I, in some sort, returned the obligation you conferred upon me."

"Nay," said the youth, "think not so meanly of me. I can never remember my sojourn in this singular place, and with so sweet a companion to while away the hours of sickness, but with pleasure. A whole life devoted to your service would but poorly repay the debt of gratitude."

The pair, during this conversation, were seated in the larger chamber of the cavern, the common apartment of the robbers when its tenants. It was evening, and the ruddy glow of the fire shone upon the figures of the Knight and his fair companion, exhibiting them in all the glow of their picturesque beauty, the dark rocky abyss as a back-ground. Bright arms and armour shewing here and there in various recesses on either hand, and

costly articles of value thrown in heaps in the various natural receptacles of the cavern. In fact, it was a scene and situation for the poet's pen and the painter's pencil.

There was a somewhat cold expression upon the Page's face, as she replied—

“Gratitude, my Lord, is a word used amongst mortals to express a virtue seldom, if ever, really felt or seen; and if it were, to me you owe it not. I but repaid the debt I owed. In you it was noble to step aside from your high station in order to save the poor peasant girl; in me it was but duty to aid the high-born soldier from death. It is not for one so humble to reap the guerdon of the smile I know belongs to another.”

There was a touch of bitterness in the girl's tone as she uttered this. Perhaps she was piqued at the studied care with which the young noble seemed to guard his words and actions, whilst his ever-following eye bore in its glance the love he felt. Perhaps, like the more manœuvring fair of modern days, she wished to precipitate a confession. Be

that as it may, her words, if she so meant succeeded not, and there was that awkward pause in the conversation which lovers soon times experience.

The youth arose from his seat and paced the cavern, whilst the fair attendant, after watching the curling smoke as it ascended to the roof of the cavern, apparently in deep thought for a brief space, suddenly caught up a sort of cittern which lay amongst other articles of spoil close at hand, and executing short prelude, warbled forth a song; the cavern echoing with the powerful tones of her voice. The young Lord of Folkstone stood entranced. He had never heard so rich a voice so exquisitely modulated. The dark recesses of the cavern sent back a thousand echoes. It seemed to him that thus deep in the bowels of the earth, he was companioned by an angel from the skies, who had been sent to give him hope and comfort in his otherwise hapless confinement.

“For never had it yet been given,
To lips of any mortal woman,
To utter notes so fresh from heaven.”

How many hearts have been softened by music, and won by a song! How many gallants have been attracted towards a fair performer whose beauty would scarce have elicited a passing remark, but from the song's prosperity, which, like that of the jest, lieth in the ear of him that hears, "never in the tongue of those who utter it." The mighty power of love, whose sway every creature owns, and which had been hitherto kept within the strict bounds of propriety in the young noble's breast, now burst forth in all its ardour. To gaze upon that form in the becoming disguise which set off the charms it could not hide, to watch those white fingers as they touched the strings of the instrument with so much grace and skill, to behold that angelic countenance as she sang—thought in each tone, feeling in every inflexion—he felt he could have devoted a whole existence. The time, the locality, the solitude in which the pair were placed—all had their charm. The song ceased, and the high-born noble was at the singer's feet. Gently he stole the hand that had touched the strings of the

cittern, and ere the tones had died away he had carried it to his lips. There was no surprise — no startled expression of alarm or indignation on the part of the fair girl. Her head had been turned from him as she sang, or he might have seen a sudden and almost imperceptible start, and in her laughter-loving eye a slight expression of joy.

She withdrew not her hand, and the Knight covered it with kisses. She seemed, indeed, to enjoy the situation for a brief space, and wait for what she knew would be likely to follow the demonstration; and the young noble poured forth a whole volume of devotion and love in her feet after the fashion and flourish of the chivalrous age.

“Divine perfection!” he said, “radiant and exquisite as thou art, pardon the excess of love that makes me thus a suppliant at your feet. Long have I adored those peerless charms, long have I struggled to conquer the flame which consumes my heart! and here I cast myself before thee, never again to rise, unless you bid me hope.”

he lady shook back the glossy tresses
h shadowed her cheek of cream, and which
worn, after the fashion of the youth of
day, to fall upon the shoulder, and slowly
ed her face towards her lover.

"If, my Lord," she said, in a somewhat
us tone, "you mean this in all truth and
ur, however much I may be grateful for
condescension, I shall feel some touch of
w. If you sue to me to return a guilty
on, I shall more deeply grieve."

"Myself, my lands, my towers, my vassals—
e thine!" exclaimed the enraptured noble.
e maiden, so warm in manner, so gentle
e, now seemed suddenly become a monu-
, so cold and frigid was her demeanour.
t can never be, my Lord," she said;
e is a barrier between us which cannot
erleaped."

w sudden is the revulsion of feeling some-
experienced by the ardent lover. That
he trifles with whilst he imagines it is
n, and seems scarcely to value, suddenly

placed beyond reach becomes beyond ~~the~~ world's worth in his esteem.

"In the name of Heaven!" exclaimed ~~the~~ Knight, passionately, "cast me not into ~~the~~ depths of misery by such an assurance. ~~What~~ barrier can exist that I will not surmount ~~for~~ thy sweet sake?"

"The same which exists on thine own ~~part~~," said the lady. "Thou art pledged to wed ~~the~~ fair Bertha Daundelyonne — betrothed, ~~promi-~~sed, engaged. I also am engaged to be ~~the~~ bride of——"

"Of whom?" said the young Lord, forgetting his weakness, and leaping to his feet. "~~Heaven!~~ my rapier's point shall win thee from ~~him!~~"

"Of the cloister," said the maiden, archly. "Your sword, my Lord, will scarce reach ~~there.~~"

The Knight stood like one transfixed, while ~~the~~ the maiden continued—

"Bethink ye, Sir Knight, for well I know ~~your~~ your pride of birth. How would it sound ~~to~~

the family of one whose banner flaps upon the towers of three castles in as many counties of fair England, that the heir of Blackstone had wedded a beggar girl? Listen, my Lord, and you shall have my story; brief, because I know but little of my-

The earliest impression I have of my infancy is associated with pomp and grandeur—the halls, tender nurture, stately forms, and smiling faces. This leads me to infer that I saw the light in some lordly castle, but whether in England, Normandy, or what other country of Europe, or whether the offspring of the owner of such fortress, or his meanest domestic, I am quite unable to say.

I remember as a shadowy dream a small portion of my infancy enjoyed amidst the privacy of the great and powerful, and in company with an early companion, a twin-born sister, as I conceive.

My next impression is of hardship and sharp privation. The cold comfort of the nightly watch, the march and the turmoil of the

camp, during which my childish companion and myself were nursed by some followers of the host, in the hot East.

-I took my next impressions of men and things as I came to years of observation amongst a company of eastern masquers, Infidels, who haunted the steps of those who came to make war against them, and to whom, I conjecture, I had been sold by those who first kidnapped and brought me to Palestine; but I had no longer a brother, if he were a brother whose companionship I remember in my infant wanderings. By these eastern strollers I was taught the accomplishments of the tribe—to dance before the tents of the noble, to sing and play during the banquet, when, under the burning sun of Syria, kings feasted each other amidst the mail-clad host.

-Young as I am, I beheld that mighty force animated by glory and religion, amounting to a hundred thousand men, and conducted by two warrior monarchs. Invincible as it looked, I beheld the united army of the cross melt away by famine, sickness, and the sword, to

able fragment, which reached home broken beggared men.

He saw the Templars in the hot sands of the desert, when the Christian host had fled, seeking death with lance in rest, and battle-axe spurring hither and thither, and still seeking death amongst the infidels, but disheartened to retire. Their iron forms sometimes were lost amidst the flame of the Greek fire, enveloped by red smoke and increasing in number. Fewer and more few they flashed like meteors shot from heaven, amidst the unbelieving multitude. Till, with morning's dawn, they had all perished.

"Honour," continued the maiden, looking upwards, "honour to those devoted knights of the cross! They sought Paradise in the arid plains of Asia, and mighty and invincible in death, they smote with their battle-hilted blades, like steeds jerking out their heads in agony where they had fallen."

There was something singularly fascinating to the young noble in thus hearing an outline of the crusade, given by one so young and

interesting, and who seemed inspired by she had beheld.

The expedition of Richard and his to Palestine, was an all-absorbing and a theme. The Troubadours and poets still upon it in their lays, and those few who had returned, and still lived, were counted and regarded as we look up to veterans of the war, amidst the peace-camp and battalions of the present time.

That this all-accomplished creature should have trod the burning sands, and beheld the banner of the Crusaders in the field of sharing the hardships of such a campaign, something wonderful to think of, and she listened to her recital with breathless interest.

"At the truce for three years," continued the girl, "by which the Christians were in possession of the coast from Acre to Joppa, the pilgrimage to Jerusalem was secured to them, the tribe to which I belonged returned to Europe, amongst those who were led by the renowned Gilbert of Daundelyonne

ing incredible hardships and miseries. In
style-courts of England and Normandy I
continued to ply my vocation with my
nions, amongst whom, as I grew older,
ed an ascendancy.

When young as I was, my proficiency in
was a continual source of gain to them,
became disgusted with their life as I
towards womanhood.

Whilst a child, my performance upon the
had simply attracted the wonder and
of those before whom we exhibited, but
when older, I became the object of insult
persecution from the youth of the camp
style.

In short, I perceived myself exposed to cer-
struction, unless I could find the means
ape from the tribe to which I belonged.
I was beloved and sought in marriage
son of our chief, so strict a watch was
upon me that for many months I could
myself of no opportunity of leaving them.
Under these circumstances, I made a solemn
to Heaven, that if I failed of discovering

during my wanderings either the brother of my childhood, or some trace of my parents, that I would dedicate myself to the cloister at the age of eighteen.

"On leaving the tribe, in order to escape persecution, I assumed male attire; and, as a professor of the joyous science, I visited many countries in the hope of finding some trace of my parents.

"In my wanderings, however, I was still subjected to danger. My sex was discovered by some hunters, as I bathed my feet in the cool waters of a brook which meandered through a forest in Brabant, and to save myself I fled and sought the shelter of a secluded spot inhabited by the sorceress of Nivelles.

"With her I remained some time; and, as her art had rendered a sojourn in Brabant dangerous to her, we passed over to England still in the hope of hearing some tidings of my parents, and for some months we resided under the cliff upon which stands the Roman town of Richborough. Without friends, except the kind creature who had succoured me in

my need, and who I quickly found was no witch, but a mere juggler, I was glad to remain, and Heaven raised me up a friend in one, with whom you yourself are acquainted, the jester Gondibert, who indeed professes to know something of my parentage.

“Through his instrumentality, when my female protector was killed and you yourself had rescued, and enabled me to find a refuge in the monastery of Salmstone, I was saved from the villany of the superior of that establishment, and succeeded in escaping.

“Under Gondibert’s advice I resumed my male attire, and he gave me in charge of the lady of Daundelyonne. Your Lordship may now guess the remainder of my story, and judge for yourself whether the poor wanderer, the nameless outcast, I have described, would be a fitting bride for the heir of Folkstone; even though she were not already the promised bride of Heaven. No: I vowed in my extremity that if the Virgin would save and protect me from dishonour whilst alone in this world of wickedness, I would dedicate the poor

remainder of my life to her service, and Heaven hath heard my prayer. An especial providence would seem to have protected the wanderer through dangers the most imminent and without a friend in the world. Judge, Knight, whether I can break so sacred oath."

She ceased, and as the young noble gazed upon her,

"Bending to earth, resigned, the mournful eye,"

he still felt that love was all powerful. His confession of his lovely companion had even more endeared her to him. He felt, that with all his pride of birth and vast possessions, was immeasurably inferior to one who had passed through such a life unsullied; for, "her soul-lit face," as he listened to her story he felt the truth of every word she uttered.

With all the eloquence of love, "strong as death," he still pleaded his suit, vowing pilgrimage to Jerusalem in order to obtain for her absolution from her vow. Seizing her hand he again threw himself upon one knee

when a slight clash, as of some armed person having changed his position, sounded in the cavern behind them. As the Knight sprang to his feet and laid his hand upon his sword, he beheld a tall dark figure standing in the gloom against an abutment of the rock only a few paces off.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TROUBADOUR.

More matter for a May morning.

SHAKESPEARE.

By thine own tongue, thou art condemned, and must
Endure our law : thou art dead.

IBID.

THE fickleness of John's disposition rendered him so uncertain, that even his most familiar followers were sometimes astonished at the rapidity with which he passed from the most malignant frame of mind to an apparent state of amiability and contentment.

On the morning in which we have seen him give directions to the two instruments he despatched to Falaise, he experienced one of these transitions, appearing suddenly to emerge from beneath a weight of evil to a buoyant state

oyment and good fellowship with all

ther it was that the dire villany he had brooded over, now that he had set his ends in motion, was, as it were, par- moved from his mind, we cannot take ourselves to say; but certain it is, that march, after dismissing Mauluc and the pon on their dreadful errand, seemed from a weight of woe; and that would have caused an ordinary person anxiety and remorse; in the interim its action and accomplishment, ap- in John a state of absolute enjoyment. made the cast he contemplated ever e Prince became his prisoner. He had the instruments ready suited to his , assayed their value, and found they d the touchstone.

English power, just at this time, was on e. The division, with which the King d himself to march, alone remaining beau. The third day from the one in Mauluc and the Brabançon were dis-

patched on their commission to Falaise was fixed for the royal departure. In the interim the news expected by the King arrived.

Meantime, on the morning of the departure of Mauluc and the Brabançon, and after the bosom of the King had been, in a measure, relieved of the perilous stuff which weighed upon his blackened heart, he gave orders to the nobles in attendance, and spent some part of the day in the apartments of the Queen-mother in easy conversation with the several ladies constituting her court.

The escape of haughty Bertha Daumery lyonne caused him considerable annoyance; and to his further chagrin, he had the disappointment of hearing during the day, that the party despatched in pursuit had failed in tracking her a single step.

The Queen-mother had more than once suggested the propriety of putting the captive minstrel, and who, she felt assured, knew something of the whereabouts of the fugitive, to the torture, in order to extort the truth from him. But John, who had already caused that youth's

removal to a strong chamber in his own wing of the castle, only smiled at the suggestion, and would not for a moment listen to it.

"Your Highness is deceived in that extraordinary specimen of a troubadour," he observed. "Believe me, whatever the fair Bertha might feel for him, his heart owns no answering flame. Nay, I am possessed of a secret concerning the youth which you little dream of."

For some days after the flight of Bertha, the King had been so much occupied by matters of business and pleasure, that he had no leisure to think of the minstrel, although he fully intended the first moment he could spare from his other amusements to unravel the mystery in which the female, he imagined he had now in his power, was enveloped.

A conversation he subsequently held with the Queen-mother again bringing the minstrel to his remembrance, he suddenly resolved to pay the captive a visit. Summoning, therefore, a confidential domestic, he issued orders preparatory to carrying his intentions into effect.

In the first place, he directed a collation to be served in the captive's apartment, also desiring the messenger to intimate the King intended to honour him with a visit, and had sent his own lute, as he wished for a specimen of his skill.

The attendant received commands likewise, instantly to procure a suit of female apparel of the newest form and most costly materials, as the King was desirous of beholding the fair troubadour in a more appropriate costume, and one which would fully display her charming form.

"Am I then to understand," said the cringing servitor, "that the captive I have in charge is a female?"

"How," said John, opening his eyes and staring at the menial, "does one so experienced as thou doubt the fact? Why, man, we discovered as much in the first five minutes of the first interview we had with her."

"Has your Highness been able to learn any thing more of the history of this youth—I mean, this lady?" inquired the attendant.

Nothing," said the monarch. "Have

"Absolutely nothing, your Grace," returned
menial, bowing low. "I humbly take my
in order to execute the commission en-
d to me."

The King now signified it was his pleasure
to his evening repast alone, and desired
he intimated to the Barons and Knights
assembled in the hall, that he should not grace
ward by his presence that night.

In the meanwhile, the unlucky minstrel, having
seen himself in so short a time deprived
of his bright hopes, was a solitary captive
in a small apartment in the royal quarter. As far
as treatment went, the prisoner had nothing
to complain of. Having experienced, since his
removal from the dungeon into which he had
been cast, every indulgence consistent
with safe keeping.

His high spirit, however, chafed under the
circumstances of his arrest, and during the few
days he had been thus coerced, he felt the
weight of years.

The Provençal poets were, as we have **before** observed, famous at this period, not **only** in their own, but in other countries. They **were** called Troubadours or Finders, from the **fer-**tility of their invention; and were in **reali-**ty the fathers of modern poetry. In the **preced-**ing reign they had been even more cherished. Richard the First had even himself become a troubadour for the nonce, and whilst a prisoner had written a poem, the first stanza of **which** being translated, runs somewhat thus:—

“ No prisoner his condition can explain,
But he will fall into a plaintive strain.
Yet to divert his sorrows he may sing,
Though he have friends, how poor the gift they **bring**.
Shame on them all! my ransom they deny,
And I in prison two long winters lie.”

The youthful minstrel, who, although **English** born, was almost a stranger to his native **land**, had acquired considerable fame in **Germany** and the East, in which latter portion of **the** globe indeed he had spent the greater part **of** his life. He had accordingly been a frequent guest at the courts and castles of the high-born; but as his indomitable spirit had **led**

him mostly amongst camps, and the alarums of war, he was as well skilled in all the military exercises of the time, as in the softer arts of poetry and minstrelsy.

Love had never taken possession of his heart until he suddenly beheld the fair Bertha Daundelyonne, and then he had felt that she was like some "bright particular star," beyond his sphere.

The disappointment and chagrin he therefore experienced at his present imprisonment was in proportion to his previous elation, at finding himself so unaccountably in favour where he had before neither acquaintance nor hope. At first, he felt all the wildness of despair when he found he could gain no decided information from the mute attendant who ministered to his wants, either of the fate of Bertha or the reason of his own captivity. On reflection, however, he began to suspect the King of having, by some means, become privy to his arrangements for the intended flight, and consequently of having given orders for his arrest. He immediately desired

He intended to furnish him with writing materials and under the excited feelings consequent upon such supposition, he busied himself in composing a bitter satire upon John, in which he lashed the tyrant to his heart's content, exposing his vices and follies in the most glaring light.

He was engaged in putting the finishing touch to the composition, when the attendant again entered his chamber, bearing the refreshments, the instrument, the apparel, and the message the King had sent in anticipation of his own visit. Delighted with his performance, the youth scarcely marking one-half of what the herald uttered, repeated the last stanza aloud as he held the composition with one hand, whilst with the other he seized the well-filled goblet he intended to drain, and which the servant had placed upon the table. As he carried the chalice to his lips, however, he was struck by the horror and dismay depicted upon the face of the attendant, who was perfectly aghast at the treasonable nature of the verse he had heard. Notwithstanding his ill fram-

of mind, the minstrel was almost inclined to burst into laughter at the ludicrous expression of dismay he beheld, when his eye fell upon the female habiliments, and he demanded their intended use.

The menial again delivered his message in full, and in an instant received the contents of the goblet full in his face.

Not satisfied with this outbreak, the minstrel then seized upon the lute which lay upon the table, and in an instant smashed it over the head of the terrified attendant; who, turning in dismay, fled from the wrath to come with the instrument hampered about his neck.

Our hero was now so much excited, that he took a couple of turns across the chamber ere he perceived that in the hurry of his departure the serving-man had left the door open behind him. To see it and to determine upon escaping were but the thought of a moment, when, as he was about to spring towards the door, it was darkened by the figure of a man entering.

in this instance he stopped short as he was at the point of springing forwards, for in the stern face, curly beard, and elf locks of the person before him, he beheld the King.

The royal visitor was dressed in an evening costume which he had donned for the occasion—a long loose gown, powdered and embroidered with gold, and girded at the waist with the jewelled belt containing his inlaid poniard. On his legs he wore satin hose also powdered with gold. Jewelled slippers were on his feet, a costly chain of pearls around his neck, and his hair, beard, and whole person reeked with perfumes.

With an easy and familiar air, and scarcely

"We are truly sorry, Sir Troubadour," he said, "at having been obliged to put so much restraint upon your person; but as we wished to secure your services entirely to ourself, we have been necessitated so to act. We hope, however, we have not altogether offended so exquisite a poet beyond the hope of pardon in this matter."

"How am I to understand this badinage, Sir King?" replied the youth. "By my hali-dame, I am not used to be thus fooled. With all true duty towards your Majesty, I bid you beware, since you are alone, of carrying a jest too far with me."

The tone of voice in which this reply was uttered, and which was more bold and manly than he had expected to be greeted with, startled the King. He raised his eyes and gazed intently upon the youth.

"Now, in the name of the foul fiend," he said, as a new light seemed to break in upon him, "who and what have we here?"

"One against whom you have no just cause of complaint," said the bold youth, "and whom

you have unjustly confined in your stronghold."

"Art thou not a follower of the Dauphynne?" asked the King, in still greater surprise.

"I am follower of no man," returned minstrel. "I accompanied the train of good knight, Sir Walter de Wingham, to England, and struck a blow for him in recent conflict. I am a troubadour, with licence to go and come from court to castle, from castle to cot, throughout Christendom, and shame be upon the heads of those who hinder one of my profession, without a just cause committed, or legal cause for so doing."

"Now, by St. Paul, we have been fooled and deceived in this matter," said the King. "What, ho! within there!" he called aloud. "secure this young traitor!"

Upon this summons, a couple of attendants immediately entered the apartment. The King managing, in all his adventures, to have assistance within hail in case of accident.

As the minstrel was unarmed, and the ruffianly-looking attendants were clad in a sort of demi-suit, and provided with weapons, he saw it would be useless to resist; and he was accordingly quickly seized in their iron gripe.

"By the mass," said John, "we begin to fear, and be of our mother's opinion in this matter. Thou art privy to the escape of the Daundelyonne, young sir," he continued, addressing the minstrel; "and art thou aware of her destination and place of refuge."

"And if I were so," returned the minstrel, "no bribe that thou hast wit enough to offer could tempt me to divulge the secret."

"Ha!" exclaimed the King, "but we will try that, Sir Knave. We will send those to whom we understand how to put the question in somewhat different form to that wherein thou hast ever been subjected to. Ha! by St. Paul, do we not recollect to have heard a saying, whilst in England, that this page, minstrel, or devil here, hath been once convicted of witchcraft or magic?"

"Some such report hath been current, my Liege," said one of the attendants, "inasmuch as he hath been distinctly seen in two places at one time."

"And what have we here?" pursued John, casting his eyes upon the satire the young poet had just indited. "Take it up, sirrah," he continued to the attendant, "and make known to us its contents."

The serving-man took the paper as he was ordered, but he hesitated, and stammered when he attempted to read it. The contents, he thought, were of such a nature that even the innocent reciter of the verses would be likely to come in for a share of the royal indignation.

"'Tis but a poem," said the man—"a wretched production, written by this person here, and scarcely worthy of your Highness's ear."

"Now, by the mass," said John, "that is exactly the sort of production we wish to judge of. I took thee from the monastery of Bury St. Edmunds where thou wast a servant

amongst the lazy brotherhood. Thou art a ripe scholar, therefore read, and let the poet bear his own verse."

"Might I so far venture to suggest," said the attendant, "I would say that, as the penmanship is rather cramped, the writer should himself be permitted to recite his own production to your Highness."

"Why, how now, Sir Knave," said the King; "thou art over-bold. Read, villain, lest I order thee to receive twenty lashes with horse-girths for every stanza penned there."

Upon this, the serving-man commenced the poem, but before he had concluded half a dozen lines, the King started up in a violent rage and snatched it from his hands.

"Hold, sirrah!" he exclaimed, in a voice of thunder. "By God's wrath, this beats anything we ever conceived or heard of! Unhappy was the hour, caitiff," he said, turning to the minstrel, "in which thou tookest upon thyself the trade of rhymers, and accursed the wit that conceived these lines. Thou art a dangerous companion to go at large; and, in so

far, we are fortunate in having found thee. Thou shalt die a cruel death to deter others from the pastime of satirising princes."

"I defy thee and thy tortures alike," said the undaunted youth. "I spit at thee, monster, and despise thee."

"Away with him!" vociferated the enraged John, "to the dungeon of the condemned! To-morrow let him be tortured till he confess all he knows concerning the flight of Bertha Daundelyonne; then let his eyes be torn out by the hangman. Ha! by my soul, have these malapert songsters so soon forgot the fate of Luke de Barra?"

It was, indeed, in this rude age, a most dangerous pastime to attempt a satire upon power. Henry the First had detected a poet named Luke de Barra in some such offence, and had condemned him to a cruel punishment not likely to be easily forgotten in after-times. He was condemned to have his eyes torn out, which sentence was accordingly executed, notwithstanding the intercession of many nobles in his favour.

King Henry was so much incensed against the satirist, that he is said to have returned for answer to the application of his nobles for mercy:—"No, sirs; this man, a wit, a minstrel, and a poet, hath misused his talents. He hath composed indecent songs in my disavour, and sung them openly for the diversion of mine enemies. God hath delivered him into my hands, and he shall be punished to deter others from a like petulance."

The cruel sentence was accordingly executed on the unfortunate de Barra, who died of the wounds he received in struggling with the executioner.

The dreadful fate of Luke de Barra was, indeed, well known to the troubadours of the time, and the remembrance of his cruel death struck upon the heart of the youthful minstrel, as he heard himself condemned to the same fate by no remorseless as the iron from which he himself was to suffer.

The attendants were about to hurry him from before the face of the frowning monarch, when a messenger, who had been in search of

the King, announced the sudden arrival of Walter Mauluc from Falaise.

The countenance of John underwent a sudden change at the news. A sort of revulsion of the heart seemed to ensue, and, from the deep red of uncontrolled rage, his cheek and brow suddenly became deadly pale, and then as quickly resumed their ordinary colour. He appeared to start at the announcement.

"So suddenly!" he muttered. "Mauluc returned so suddenly! What may this portend? Is he alone?" he inquired of the messenger.

"Alone, my liege," returned the man.

"Wait on him hither, Sirs," said John quickly—instantly. Stay, Sirs," he continued, addressing himself to the men-at-arms who held the minstrel, "we have not leisure at the moment to hear the report of your quest with yonder malapert poet. Let him be done with at high noon to-morrow."

The minstrel was accordingly hurried from the chamber at the same moment. Walter Mauluc, armed from head to heel, entered

“How now, Sir Knight!” enquired the King.

“Your news. Good, an’ Heaven will.”

“Your Highness must be the best judge of that,” answered Mauluc. “My news is, however, not bad. It might have been better, if my true duty towards your Grace’s service had not been thwarted.”

“Doth Arthur live?” inquired the King.

“He does, my liege,”

“Then, caitiff as thou art, and whom I have raised from the very scum of Poiteau to be my own esquire, how can thy news be good?”

“I live but to obey your royal orders,” said Mauluc, “and would willingly die for the convenience of one I so highly honour.”

“To the infernal fiends with your professions of service!” said the enraged King. “I thought we understood each other better. Whilst Arthur lives I am in fear.”

“Your royal commission extended not to death,” returned Mauluc; “nevertheless, I had made the business sure, if Hubert de Burgh had not taken upon himself to suspend matters until your Highness was further consulted.”

"Where tarries Sir Raoul de Brabant?" ~~in-~~quired John.

"He departed, so soon as matters were inter-
fered with, in order to collect his followers, ~~and~~
proceeded on the other mission your Highness
gave him regarding the damsel of Brittany."

"All wrong, by St. Paul," said John, pacing
the apartment. "We wished this business ~~first~~
to have been transacted, and to have watched
the tempers of those around ere we pounced
upon the fair Breton."

The King now again paced the apartment ~~for~~
some moments, but suddenly, however, seemed
to recollect himself.

"Get some refreshment, Sir Knight," he said,
"and forgive the comments my anger made.
To-morrow you must return towards Falsie,
good Mauluc. We must trust this matter
entirely to your especial guidance; as it is,
believe me, I am much bounden to you for the
ready zeal you have displayed."

So saying, the King sought yet more to
repair his former rudeness, and leant upon
Mauluc's shoulder as they left the apartment

o proceed to his own chamber, where he acquired more fully into the nature of the proceedings.

Mauluc gave him a full and circumstantial account of the interference of Hubert, adding few flourishes of his own in the hope of incensing the King against the Warden of 'laise. Without however gaining his object, the King uttered no word of anger against Hubert, merely remarking that he should remove the Prince from the custody of that Knight, and change his place of imprisonment.

"Yes," he said, "Sir Mauluc, to-morrow we will give thee full powers. The Prince shall to Rouen as speedily as may be."

John now ordered refreshments to be served in his own apartment, and even condescended to invite Mauluc to sit down and partake with him. Scarce, however, was this meal commenced, when another messenger was announced, bearing important despatches.

"We will be no further molested now," cried John, petulantly. "'Tis but some despatch

from the Knight of Daundelyonne of Salisbury. To-morrow will be time enough to peruse it. Drink, Sir Knight," he said, raising his goblet. "Come, fill. 'Here's to the health of the fair Clotilde, the heiress of grief.'"

"If I might venture to interrupt you Highness," said the attendant, "the Knight of Daundelyonne hath certainly sent a party of importance by the jester Gondibert, who reports the party he commanded as being all cut to pieces, Sir Gilbert's son amongst the slain."

"We care not for them, sirrah," said the other. "Were the race of Daundelyonne—excepting the fair Bertha, Sir Mauluc—the other world, we see no reason why we should be interrupted, and our digestion disturbed."

"Nevertheless," urged the man, "your presence will be good enough to bear with me whilst I tell from whence comes the messenger whom I especially wish to announce."

"Hence, villain," exclaimed John, at

up, and now somewhat flustered; "wouldst thou dare the lion's fangs?"

"He is from ——" proceeded the man, retreating towards the door, yet still holding out the despatch he knew it would be fatal not to deliver—"He is from ——"

"Falaise," said Gondibert, entering and snatching the packet from the serving-man, at the same time stepping up and presenting it to John. "Read it, cousin," he said. "Ever follow knowledge wherever it is to be found. Like fern-seed, it is the produce of all countries. Its circulation is swift and not restricted."

"From Falaise!" exclaimed John, taking the despatch and tearing it open.

"Aye, from Falaise," repeated the Jester, casting a shrewd glance at Mauluc, who bent an evil eye upon him. "Perhaps though," he continued, as if to himself, "'tis but old news after all. But I heard as I rode that young Prince Arthur ——"

"Is dead," said John.

"Dead!" echoed Mauluc. "Your Grace

surprises me. From whom is this intelligence?"

"From Hubert," replied the King. "He writes me word —" then turning suddenly upon Gondibert, "Avoid the chamber, Sir Kna~~ve~~, or we shall crop those long ears of thine."

"Truly so," coincided the Jester: "but ~~in~~ order that those of my master may not ~~be~~ cropped also, I must beg you to peruse ~~the~~ despatch I likewise bring. By the same toke~~n~~, I swore an oath that if I hung for my pains, I would in person deliver it. The good Knight ~~at~~ craves succour, my liege. His party are ~~per~~ up, all that remain of them, in Chateau Trou~~ble~~ pilion, where they are surrounded by a ho~~st~~, and whence I have escaped to bring the ti~~de~~ings. The Daundelyonne dies, but yields no~~t~~. He will yet manage to hold out till succo~~ur~~ arrives, but it must be speedy to be of any avail."

"I have other and more pressing matter," replied John, waving his hand impatiently. "To-morrow we will take order for this."

"To-morrow the Knight of Daundelyonne

falls with the towers he garrisons," urged Gondibert. "He will starve his garrison, or cut his own windpipe ; but he will never either yield or be conquered. Your Highness's neglect will lose a bold and ready soldier."

"Hence, fool," said the King, "you have our answer."

"O monster!" muttered the Jester to himself, as he left the apartment. "Strong to execute evil, but blind to perceive even thine own good. Whoso serves thee is likely to reap a poor recompense."

"Our good and trusty Hubert," resumed John, so soon as the Jester had made his exit, "writes me word, here, that our beloved nephew deceased on Wednesday night, some three hours after your departure. He further adds, that he has taken order for the funeral, and that he has publicly announced the event. This is somewhat melancholy intelligence, Sir Knight. We trust it will not be rumoured that through any orders we have given, such an event can have occurred."

If anything could by possibility turn the

hearts of the vile instruments of rem power towards the path of rectitude, i surely be the precarious nature of the they are likely to receive. Of all the m who ever made use of men's unscrupul sciences, John was perhaps one of tl vile. He felt no sort of shame or ren shaking himself clear of his instrume instant he had used them, if he ne needed their services; and outfacing tl moment, would consign them to deatl than openly shield them by his counten support, or aid their escape from ju Sinking ripe, he put his foot upon thei

Mauluc had many instances in his to remind him of this, but he was a c scheming villain, and trusted to his o and cunning to attain his ends, notwi ing the dangerous nature of the m served. It was like a game of chance, both players were false and hollow as they threw.

"Your Grace's instructions were mo said Mauluc, "both to Sir Raoul de

and myself. That the youth has sunk under the trial to which we were therein ordered to submit him, (although but in part performed,) I can easily believe. Should such be the case—and the Duke of Brittany be really dead—I hold myself not responsible for the event, since I can produce the warrant your Highness placed in my hands. I am, however, inclined to look upon the event, if really true, as most fortunate. The youth was before evidently sinking from the grief and chagrin of his confinement; and it will, doubtless, be supposed that he hath died from those causes. So die all your Highness's troubles."

"I know not that," said John, gloomily. "I learn further from Hubert, that the Bretons are enraged beyond measure, and that he is greatly threatened by the revolted Barons. In fact, that all around him is in the most dire confusion; whilst men scruple not to say openly, that Arthur hath met with foul play."

The fellowship of villany held the pair long over their cups; and in the discussion of much

wine and more evil, the dark hours wore on. Fresh plots were culled and posed for the morrow. But the brought its own buds forth ; and the of the poor compounded clay were as

CHAPTER X.

AN ESCAPE.

O noble fool!

A worthy fool!—Motley's the only wear.

SHAKESPERE.

It will doubtless be easily surmised by our readers that the Warden of Falaise, in pursuance of the scheme he had conceived, and in the hope of saving the Prince, had spread a report of his death, and had also attempted the somewhat hazardous project of deceiving, in so imminent a matter, the dangerous John.

It was, indeed, a perilous essay, and even if successful for a time, could hardly fail of involving himself eventually in the ruin from which he wished to preserve his charge. He was playing with the envenomed teeth of the tiger, and well did he know the risk he ran.

The gentle Hubert, however, as his course of life has shown, possessed as much mind as his heart was dauntless. He had vainly hoped to have saved the broken-hearted Prince at least for some time, in the hope that a reconciliation might have been arranged between them and nephew. Such, however, was not the case.

The report of Arthur's death, in that time, enraged the Bretons to so great a degree that they vowed a deep revenge for which they scrupled not to designate as his murderer. The revolted Barons also called upon their countrymen to aid them in their rebellion, and the firebrands of war, which before might have but to have smouldered, and sent forth occasional sparks, now seemed kindling a flame which no man would have the power to extinguish.

Under these circumstances, the King (who affected to blame the traitor but secretly rejoiced at,) wrote an intimate letter to Hubert, even rebuking him for not following the instructions he had himself tra-

by his myrmidons, to the effect that for a space he should give up the entire charge of the Prince into their hands.

It was on the receipt of this letter that Hubert thought it prudent to reveal the secret; and immediately inform the world that the Duke of Brittany was still alive. John was on the march from Mirabeau when he received this news, which fell upon his ears like a clap of thunder.

The satisfaction it evidently gave to the different nobles around was also wormwood to him, and for the first few moments, after halting to peruse the despatch which announced the tidings, he sat upon his steed like one bewildered. At length, he gave the word to the knights and gentlemen in his immediate vicinity to move forwards, and then, as was his usual custom when out of sorts, associated himself with those of baser degree, who were commonly the companions of his darker councils.

The result of the deliberations he held was an immediate order for the main part of his

power to move forwards towards Rouen, whither he also directed the young Duke of Brittany to be instantly conveyed under strong escort.

This order was a heavy blow to Hubert. Under the circumstances in which he had lived with his prisoner, during the time he had feigned the Prince's death, the youth had necessarily become even more endeared to him. The amiability and fortitude of the unhappy captive had so won upon the heart of his keeper, during the short period they had been thrown so closely together, that it was like the parting of father and son. Well did Hubert guess the probable fate of the young Duke; and all the horrible anticipations of the former diabolical attempt were now again presented to his mind with sterner force.

John had, however, this time put it out of his power to disobey. The force he had sent to Falaise as escort to the Prince precluded all possibility of evading or tampering with the order. Hubert also found himself superseded in the wardenship of the castle of Falaise, and commissioned, together with Lupicars,

one of his Brabançons, to advance to the relief of the castle of Passelieu, a small fortress which was besieged by a party of the enraged Bretons.

In the extremity of grief to which Hubert was reduced by these measures, he might have been led to the commission of some act of desperation, which, without in the least aiding the cause of his unfortunate charge, would have involved him in deep disgrace with his royal master; but, in the midst of his trouble and perplexity, it happened, luckily for him, that an old acquaintance unexpectedly arrived

Falaise. This was no other than Rondibert, the jester of Daundelyonne, who, covered with dust and blood, and stained with the variation of each soil betwixt Mirabeau and Falaise, suddenly presented himself.

Between the Jester and Hubert there had for many years existed a strict friendship. All the folly of the motley coat was thrown aside when they held converse together; and the king's abuse, the cares of the state, and matters

of deep import were commonly and unreservedly discussed by them.

Many a time in former days, when the shadows of the closing day fell upon tower and turret, upon wood and fell, had the Jester sat with Hubert de Burgh in his apartment in the keep of Dover Castle, (that fortress where the Warden was, in the after-part of John's reign, to play so noble a part,) and canvassed matters of a deep and dangerous character; lamenting the implacability of temper of the King, his want of principle in his political conduct, his bad passions, and his hollow heart.

In fact, as the reader must have surmised by this time, the Jester Gondibert was in reality no fool. He was certainly playing a part on the stage for the nonce, and whether, for some end only known to himself and especial friends, he had assumed the coxcomb to carry out his own private views, or whether merely to amuse the passing hour, we cannot at this stage of proceedings stay to consider. But that he was a wise, brave, and noble-hearted man, and

both a sincere friend and bitter enemy when he felt the extremes of love and hate,—of this we have reason to be satisfied.

In the present instance the Jester displayed considerable influence even over the iron Hubert,—his presence proving like oil upon the troubled sea of the Warden's spirit.

"Go, my friend," he said, laying his hand upon Hubert's shoulder, after perusing the fatal order from the King, "believe me, you are powerless in this. We cannot hold the strong hand of power. The reasons I have possessed you with will make me a spy upon what is going on at Rouen, and possibly I may circumvent the villany of this Mauluc. If not, the hand of Heaven is not to be restrained by a weak and debile minister. Go, my friend," he continued, "put your foot in the stirrup, shake your lance in air, and forget in action the sorrows of the world. I will remain beside the unfeeling John, who has taken a fancy to my harsh truths of late, and perhaps I may keep evil councillors from his board. The youth I named to you before is

also in jeopardy. Him likewise I must make an effort to rescue from durance, and in aiding one I may serve both. Away then, and teach thy necessity to reason with thy grief; but trifle no more with dangerous majesty."

In order to pursue the somewhat twisted and ravelled skein of our story, we must explain to our readers that when Gondibert left the royal presence, after making his unsuccessful application for relief to be immediately sent to his master, he resolved to seek out one or two of the Knight of Daundelyonne's private friends, who he knew, on being made acquainted with his extremity, would organize a little expedition on their own account, and giving their banners to the wind, advance to the Knight's relief. Under this conviction he sought out the gallant Earl of Salisbury, showed him the necessity of the case, and entreated instant help.

The good Earl was by no means behind-hand in granting the favour. The Daundelyonne was his friend and brother-in-arms; one whom he esteemed in those stirring times

as beyond price: a man of strict truth and high integrity; a true knight, and brave as the steel he wore. The stout Earl and his followers were, indeed, somewhat disgusted at the lukewarmness of John in this matter; and taking it up as a personal cause, in ten minutes after hearing of the extremity of his friend, his clarions sounded to horse, his followers mustered; and in ten minutes more, the stout earl, accompanied by Sir John Passelieu, Ralph de Fauconier, Geoffrey de Lucy, and their several trains, were in full march towards Trompilion.

Whilst the good Gondibert negotiated this matter, he learned amongst the numerous friends he possessed at court, of the flight of the Lady Bertha; and upon the heels of that intelligence came a whole farrago of impudence and scandal, in the shape of a garbled account of the apprehension, imprisonment, and intended execution of her minion, the favoured page.

Gondibert, covered with the dust and soil of more than one fray, and many miles of

travel, his motley wear concealed by demi-suit, his long ears compressed iron casque, and his lathen rapier e for a ponderous blade, was solacing with a pasty and flagon, when this retailed to him.

He stopped the progress of his me story was related, and rose from t oaken chair he was seated in,—

“Stay, friend,” he said to the pe was hurrying on in all the delight o bearer; “I pr’ythee tell thy story lil of this world, and take time to words distinctly. If all this be tr have already heard, my duty lies in t and I need neither to hurry my sup nor speed my way hence, as I intend

“Such is in sooth the fact,” return Trencher. “The King’s attendant, would have had the job of putting t to his purgation, but I suppose you l he hath met with a misfortune, and through the body by William de la F

“All I know,” said the Jester, “

know nothing. How, good Wyvil Trencher, can I know news of the court here, when I have been shut up in Trompilion with a scum of Bretons, ready to eat me up alive? So the burley De Bossu hath met his reward, hath he? I pray thee, since such is the case, unhook my casque, and let my ears drink thy tidings, and my galled head gain a respite whilst I feed. Thou hast already possessed me with strange intelligence; I pr'ythee finish thy story whilst I proceed with my supper."

"I had ere this finished it," said Wyvil, "hadst thou not interrupted me, Gondibert. Methinks thou art one of those who had rather talk than listen, let who would be the speaker."

"Not at meals, good Wyvil, not at meals," replied the Jester, "especially when one so wise as thou relatest. I pr'ythee hand me up that dish of stewed collops from the hearth, and finish thy story. So the knave, De Bossu, hath been wounded by De la Bray?"

"He hath," said Wyvil.

"What were the circumstances?" inquired the Jester.

"Nay," returned Wyvil, "you must be close in the matter, for none of us care to know too much of the transactions of De Bossu. De la Bray, it appears, suspected the Bravo of dishonesty what time he accompanied him on the road to Falaise, and to rid himself of his company turned and ordered him back. De Bossu urged the King's instructions to attend upon him on the journey, upon which De la Bray was wroth, and telling De Bossu that he was but a common cut-throat, whose trade he knew was murder, turned and attacked the Bravo, and, after a rapid and desperate conflict, ran him through, and afterwards escaped to England."

"Truly, these are stirring times we live in, Wyvil," said the Jester; "men change service as the vane turns to the blast. I would I were safe ensconced in my snug berth beside the hearth at Daundelyonne. What say'st thou, eh?"

"I would it were no worse," answered the attendant; "but there are many of us here will never look upon the white cliffs of Kent again, good Gondibert. Whether you and I shall do so, Heaven only knows."

"Tush, man," said Gondibert, "thou art growing fearful in thine old age. Mercy on us! how the wind sounds to-night. Come, draw thy stool nearer the hearth and fill another cup for the nonce. I have a favour to ask: I want thee to get me an interview with this condemned minstrel to-night."

"Nay, Gondibert," said Wyvil, "bethink ye now, would you draw my neck into the halter? Besides, I know not how I can aid you in the matter."

"Easily," said Gondibert. "Thou possessest the key to most men's hearts. Thou art the warden of the wine-cellar. Invite me the jailor of the condemned cells, to taste of thy cup here, and ply him well."

"And then?" said Wyvil.

"And then I will contrive to be placed on sentry over the prison. Look ye, I have but

to polish up my harness and close my visor, and lo! I am a man-at-arms for the nonce."

"And so should I be certain of being scourged with iron rods for my share in whatever it might please you in your vagaries to execute," remarked Wyvil with a shrug. "Marry, who would be the fool then, think ye?"

"You yourself," returned the Jester, "if you should find it jump with your wisdom to betray your part in the transaction. But come, I demand this service of thee, good master Wyvil, and by those defalcations thou wottest of, but which I do not mean to betray, I advise you to aid me in this business. Remember, good friend, a fool is often as dangerous to deal with as a knave, and always more incorrigible."

It was some two hours after this conference that the strong door of the cell in which the minstrel was confined was slowly opened, and the next moment the dark figure of a man-at-arms, holding a lamp in his hand, stood before him. The youth was seated upon the damp straw which had served for the couch of ~~now~~

than one precedent captive. When the stranger entered, and as he started to his feet, the heavy chains which manacled his legs showed the care with which he had been secured.

The stranger raised the lamp at arm's length, and gazed with some little surprise. It would seem by his puzzled look that this was not exactly the person he expected to find entombed in the vaults he had sought out. After a few moments he was about to approach nearer to the prisoner, but the minstrel bade him stand off.

"Beware, fellow," he said, "I am chained and unarmed. Thou may'st hew me down, as they poll an ox, but beware my gripe. If thy coward master hath sent thee hither to end me in my cell, thou shalt find the task, at least, no easy one."

"St. Radegonde of Poitiers!" exclaimed Gondibert, "but this is strange. Calm yourself, good youth; I come to do you service. I pray thee be assured. Nay, then, I relinquish my weapon—look: I place it against the wall here."

"For what purpose hast thou visited my cell?" inquired the Minstrel. "I know thee not. I wish not for thy company. The few hours I have to tarry on earth I would fain pass in contemplation and prayer."

"Strange!" said the Jester to himself, as he regarded the prisoner steadfastly, "that I should have spent two years in Asia and ten in hunting Europe over to find this boy, and that I should now lit upon him so many feet underground! I pray thee, good youth, answer my question briefly: thou wast once of Chinon, in Touraine?"

"Who and what art thou who askest such a question?" replied the Minstrel. "Lift thy beaver that I may know thee."

"In good time," added the Jester; "meanwhile, answer me. Thy name is Clothaire, surnamed Le Hardi: am I right?"

"Such is the name I have gone by in many countries," answered the Minstrel in some surprise.

"And thou hast the mark of the cross upon thy right arm?"

he name of the Virgin, tell me,—who art thou?" inquired the Minstrelly. "Methinks I recognise the tone of a voice long thought dead."

From one who means nothing but good to the returned Gondibert. "Here, take this and get rid of the manacles which confine thee. Time flies apace, and, if thou art to die a cruel death, thou must put many betwixt thyself and Falaise ere the time for relief of guard."

The Minstrel sprang from the corner of his shadow where he had drawn himself like a tiger ready to fight to the last gasp, and the file commenced cutting through the rings by which one of his ancles was bound, whilst the Jester, with a similar movement, essayed the other leg.

"Joy!" cried the youth, springing up, and already at liberty and in the open air once more."

"It is only when we have been sick almost to death," observed Gondibert, quietly, "that we feel the blessing of returning health."

Moderate your transports, good Clothaire, I the guard without hear them, in which case you will quickly relapse. Be silent, and follow."

The Jester now led his charge through long and dismal souterrain, which seemed to run under the whole extent of the fortress. In the centre of it they came to a part where the roof was arched and beautifully carved. Here it was intersected by another passage of similar extent, which led on either hand to dungeons like the one they had left. They were now in the lowermost vaults of the castle—the condemned cells of Mirabeau,—where the unhappy captive, when once immured, was frequently either utterly forgotten in the busy world above, or perhaps purposely left to expiate his alleged crimes by starvation.

At the extremity of this passage they once more found themselves amongst a cluster of dungeons. The Jester entered one of these, and descending a flight of steps, found himself opposite a sally-port which led into the ditch of the castle. In this dark and dim

drain, for it appeared no better, the Jester paused, and laid his hand upon his companion.

"You feel the pure air of heaven upon your cheek?" he asked.

"I do," returned the youth; "it breathes of warmth and life; we have exchanged it for the cold death-like chill of the vaults."

"We are now near the entrance," said the Jester; "be silent as death, and remain here, whilst I go forward to reconnoitre."

The minstrel was now left alone in the damp cold passage which led to the sally-port, and in total darkness, for Gondibert had extinguished his lamp as soon as they had entered the narrower passage. If his heart had been capable of fear, he might have felt some tremors now, for the situation was not an enviable one, since to return would have been difficult, and to go forward without his guide would have led to capture. His conductor, however, returned, after about a quarter of an hour's absence.

"I have filed through the lock of the iron grating," he observed, "which admits us to the ditch of the inner ballium; there is, however,

still something to be done. You must ensconce yourself in my harness, in order to hide your own habiliments, or we shall scarce pass muster."

So saying, Gondibert proceeded to divest himself of the shirt of linked mail and the helmet which covered his motley suit, and the youth as quickly assumed them.

"And how will you yourself pass?" inquired Clothaire, as he fitted the casque upon his head, and closed the visor. "How will you pass, without disguise of some sort?"

"I require none," replied Gondibert; "you forget, the motley suit is seldom questioned. We gentry have liberty like the wind, to go and come as we list. The sentinel on the slope must, however, be dealt with, or you will be arrested. Whilst I parley, you must steal upon him."

"I cannot strike a man at advantage," replied the youth, promptly; "not even for the blessing of recovered liberty and life will I so dishonour myself."

"To attack him openly," said Gondibert,

"would bring the whole swarm upon us from the barbican, like bees from a hive. I admire your scruples, but they are a stumbling-block to your advancement just now. What's to be done?"

"I will advance upon the guard, and cut him down if he opposes me," said the Minstrel.

"It would lead to ruin," returned the Jester; "but, soft! what sparkles here in the ray of light from the grating?"

"By heaven! it is the King's signet," said Clothaire, "which has been forgotten upon my finger up to this hour."

"Enough!" said Gondibert, "follow quickly, for we have already delayed too long. Yet stay," he resumed, "hearken to yonder sound. By St. Paul! they have discovered our flight. Thou wilt yet suffer the punishment of a satirical poet, and I shall be put to death for a faithless man-at-arms. In God's name, hasten onwards; we have some minutes the start of them, if they take the right-hand turning; more, if they hold on along the main passage."

With this, the Jester hurried on, followed by

the youth, and passing into the ditch, ascended the slope on the other side.

"Stand!" said the sentinel, bringing down his partisan.

"Is that necessary, friend?" asked Gondibert coolly; "we are upon the King's service and would fain be moving onwards, with your permission."

"Who, and what are you?" inquired the sentinel.

"Perhaps, friend, you'll do us the favour to examine this bauble," replied Gondibert; "in the meantime—Ah! I thought so!—always grant graciously what you cannot refuse safely. God shield thee, soldier, and send thee speedy relief, this cold night. Adieu!"

The Jester now hurried on, and his companion followed quickly at his heels. By virtue of the ring, they also passed the barrier, and eventually succeeded in gaining the streets of the town. Here they held a short and hasty conference together, ere they separated.

"The times are wild," remarked Gondibert, "and he who can see further than his nose

may spy a dire scene of confusion at hand. Put the wide waters between thyself and this land as fast as possible. We are all for England, anon, depend on't, or we shall be scourged hence, as we are progressing now. Meanwhile, there is no time for parley ; remember what I have advised, and meet me, at all events, this day three months."

"There hath been foul and infamous wrong done to the noble Lady of Daundelyonne," said Clothaire ; "and until I have discovered the ravisher who hath carried her off, and have succeeded in setting her at liberty, I will not leave this land."

"Nay, then," said Gondibert, shrugging his shoulders, "if it must be, be it so. I give up my intent of seeking out the mystery of Bertha Daundelyonne's flight, and will return towards Falaise. Meanwhile, remember what I before hinted to thee of my suspicions of Mauluc and the Brabançon. I overheard some part of a scheme which the event seems to fasten upon that pair of worthies. Turn thy horse's head, therefore, towards Brittany ; whilst I, mean-

while, have an eye upon the other caitiff at Falaise. Farewell! clear the city walls at day-break, and God speed thee. If the sun rise upon thee within Mirabeau, thy life is forfeit."

CHAPTER XI.

THE OUTLAWS' CAVERN.

But love, first learned in a lady's eye,
Lives not alone immured in the brain;
But with the motion of all elements,
Courses as swift as thought in every power;
And gives to every power a double power,
Above their functions and their offices.
It adds a precious seeing to the eye;
A lover's eyes will gaze an eagle blind;
A lover's ear will hear the lowest sound.

* * * * *

For valour, is not love a Hercules,
Still climbing trees in the Hesperides,
Subtle as Sphinx, as sweet and musical
As bright Apollo's lute, strung with his hair?

SHAKESPEARE.

WE must now cast a backward glance to the Lord of Folkstone and his companion in the outlaw's cavern, and whom we left somewhat startled by the apparition of an armed spy upon their secret conference. The stranger

advanced towards the lovers so soon as he saw he had been observed. He stood for a few moments gazing upon the lady through the bars of his helmet ; and as the flame of the fire shone upon his steel harness and ponderous arms, he seemed a form of giant height.

After regarding her for a short time with a searching and steady gaze, whilst the young noble, his hand upon his weapon, stood in act to step to her aid, the stranger, slowly turning his gaze from her, as if unwilling to leave the contemplation of so much beauty, addressed the Knight.

“Sir Knight,” he said, “I have been an unwilling witness of some part of your conference with this lady, by which I have penetrated the secret of her disguise, and the cheat you have both passed upon me. ’Tis lucky I came hither unexpected and unattended. Our laws are strict, nor dare I infringe them by showing the slightest partiality. By such laws, a woman discovered, concealed or disguised in our fastness, becomes the victim of the band ; and yonder dark stream, whose roar

has hindered you from hearing my approach, is the destined place of punishment for such offender."

As the stranger finished speaking, he lifted the visor of his helmet, and discovered a countenance of considerable masculine beauty, although it was completely overgrown with the curly beard and moustache, which covered the lower portion of his countenance; the lofty height, herculean proportions, and magnificent carriage of the man forming a perfect model of a rugged warrior of an early age.

There was nothing rude or ruffianly in his deportment; and in his movement, voice, and gesture, it appeared that the ponderous and somewhat rusted suit in which he was equipped, and the shield which hung around his neck, with no symbol upon its dented surface to show the world he was a gentleman, made a false report of the wearer.

The Lord of Folkstone, at the words of the bandit, unsheathed his weapon like lightning; whilst the lady, who shuddered at the dread-

ful fate with which she was threatened, clung to his side for protection.

Although the young Knight was but partially recovered from his wounds, and consequently lacked his wonted strength and vigour, his skill in arms would be likely to avail him much against an unknighly antagonist, and who, from early youth, had not been trained to any sort of weapon.

"Ruffian," he said, "whose threats towards a woman within the shelter of your refuge are cowardly as base, I will slay thee like the commonest felon, if thou offerest but the shadow of violence towards her."

The robber smiled.

"It is ill coming between the lover and he he loves," he quietly remarked: "that you will do your devoir in the lady's behalf nothing doubt, Sir Knight, but your effort would be vain. In half an hour great part of my band will arrive here; and, meanwhile, you are in no condition for a champion, albeit love would doubtless nerve your arm."

"Nay," said the girl, advancing, and throwing herself at the feet of the robber; "wherefore should there be strife between us? Men speak thee fair, good Guischard. Let there be peace between this Knight and thee. Permit the young Lord of Folkstone to depart. We but awaited your return to thank you for the hospitable shelter you have so long afforded us."

The bandit again gazed upon her with marked admiration, and then raised her from the ground.

"Be it so, fair maiden," he said; "the young Knight is at liberty to depart from us; but pardon me if I add, that you can scarce go with him."

"By heaven!" exclaimed the youth, "I will consent to be entombed in this cavern till the last trumpet call me to upper air, ere I leave it unaccompanied by her I love."

"Be content, Sir Knight," returned the outlaw; "the lady shall not undergo the danger of a longer residence amongst us than will suffice for me to extricate her with safety

from so perilous a situation. With morning's dawn she also shall seek another and a safer refuge: but it will be in my company, and under my escort."

"Nay, then," exclaimed the Lord of Folkstone, "'tis idle to waste more words. Let go, ruffian, thy hold upon the lady's arm, or I will assail thee where thou standest, and slay thee, though backed by all thy band."

The robber again smiled, as he drew back a pace, and raised his hand.


"'Twould avail thee not to do so," he said. "On the contrary, you would but lose the chance of again beholding the light of heaven. Without mine own, or the guidance of one of my people, no power could teach thee the secret of this cavern. Listen, Sir Knight," he continued, "and trust to an outlaw's word. I swear to thee upon the cross of my weapon, that this lady's honour and safety shall be as dear to me as to thyself. There is imminent danger every moment she remains here. 'Tis now too late to think of leaving the cavern till the return of my people, as the attempt would —

bring upon us suspicion and discovery ; but, on their arrival, I will take an opportunity of guiding you both in safety to the upper world. The lady shall then make choice between us, as to which is to protect her from further danger.

“I scorn,” he continued, addressing the sometime page, “to take any unfair advantage of one whom circumstances have placed in my power. I am an outlaw, whose profession is rapine and violence, but I have still some nurture, some remaining remembrance of the better feelings of a better trade. Will it be asking too much to crave a few words with you ere my band returns? Your lover, provided he be out of ear-shot of our conference, may remain to see I offer no rudeness towards you.”

The girl, with the frankness of her nature, gave her hand to the robber, and they stepped a few paces from the spot where the Knight stood.

“I have small time for conference,” said the robber earnestly ; “time presses, and my band will be here anon. Meanwhile, I have already



first moment I saw you, you came
me as bearing resemblance to
former years. Thou hast a m
shoulder; thou hast,—I know
mistaken. Thou art she who
hath long watched over, and wh
to save, when the sorceress of
killed in Kent.”

“I am,” said the girl; “but, C
me truly, art thou then the pare
dibert has darkly hinted at? I
panted to trace my parentage to
able source, and do I now find
a common robber, condemned to
bowels of the earth in order
hangman’s cord?”

ne, have been driven to embrace the life in
ch you behold me engaged."

The young noble, who, in courtesy to his
er-host, had withdrawn a few paces whilst
held conference with the girl, stood with
folded in the gloom of the cavern, keenly
ing the event of a conversation he both
land supposed might lead to the freedom
nself and her he loved. As he kept a
eye upon the tall form of the robber,
d himself in readiness at any moment to
to her assistance on the slightest symp-
f treachery or offered rudeness.

ir situation he knew was one of great
lty and peril. They were in the den of
on, in his power, and almost helpless.
mself he entertained comparatively little
ension or care; but for one so exqui-
beautiful to be thus at the mercy of a
s sense of courtesy and chivalrous feel-
as a perilous chance indeed.

the Knight watched with jealous eye
nversation of the pair, his fears for the

safety of the lady, gradually gave place to surprise, jealousy, indignation, and scorn.

At first he felt surprised at the increasing animation and interest with which the conversation was carried on; and, as the dialogue proceeded, and the speakers removed further from the place where he himself had taken up his stand, the green-eyed monster whispered a thousand evil suggestions in his ear.

The Robber-captain was a splendid figure of a man; and as he seemed to plead his suit, it appeared to the young noble that the lady's manner was anything but repelling. Then came divers reflections upon her former errant life; brought up and nurtured amidst the followers of a camp, even according to her own account; spending her infancy and receiving her education amidst the very scum of society—and he began to suspect—Heaven help him!—that with all her plausibility, eloquence, and seeming innocence, his fair attendant was little better than she should be. A little deceitful gipsy, with a winning tongue, and a wicked heart.

his jealousy and surprise, however, were
ly mixed up with no slight degree of
and scorn, and he stood perfectly aghast,
he beheld this still interesting and
iful creature absolutely throw herself
he robber's arms, and then kneel at his

ere was, however, small time to comment
the matter, as almost ere the chief had
the lady, and seemed about to lead her
spot where the young noble stood, the
blast of a bugle sounded from the dark
beyond the stream, a confused hubbub,
a large party advancing, was heard, and
ext moment, the rude figures of the ban-
uproarious in their mirth, came bounding
ne cavern.

Robber-chief was as good as his word.
st the scene of riotous hilarity, and during
ast and revel which succeeded the en-
of his band, he took an opportunity of
g from his place at the head of the
Then, desiring the seeming page,
he had kept in close attendance upon

himself—to warn the Knight to follow, he led them along a narrow passage towards that part of the subterranean stream where the boat was moored. Silently and stealthily they embarked, and the chief then instructed the young noble to feel for an oar in the prow of the craft, and pull silently, whilst he himself seized upon its fellow, and together they rowed themselves and their fair charge across the stream.

Their attempt was fraught with danger, as it was not the custom amongst the fraternity, to dismiss their captives, but by general consent of the whole band; an ordeal the captain did not think fit to put his prisoners through. And in the event of their absence being noted, and the suspicions of the band once aroused, even his own position as captain would not have saved them from destruction. Their progress also, in the dark labyrinth, was by no means easy; for as it was the invariable custom of the banditti to extinguish the light by which they had guided themselves, so soon as they had gained the stream, the Chief had to trust to his knowledge of the different local-

in utter darkness—a task he had never before undertaken. Their movements were before slow and perilous. Sometimes they crossed the shelving and rocky side of the gully, which, scarcely wide enough for a precarious footing, was rendered more dangerous by the sound and roar of the dark stream deep beneath their feet. It was indeed like travelling in the valley of the shadow of Death. The robber with the hand of the lady clasped beneath his own, led the way, and the young Knight followed, clad in the chain harness he now wore for the first time since he had received his wounds.

After proceeding for some time along this dangerous pathway, they came to a vast cavern, as was apparent from the echo of their own footsteps, and their conductor's low whisper. When a certain number of paces had been gained, which the robber carelessly counted, they paused for a few mo-

When they did so, the sound of the distant bell was faintly but plainly to be distin-

guished. They were troling forth a boisterous glee over their flagons.

The Captain drew a long breath, as he caught the sounds, which assured him all was so far propitious; and whilst they paused, he appeared to be diligently searching for some object on the rocky surface of the cave.

For some time his search was fruitless, and he seemed at fault. Again he went to work, and took a wider range, whilst his companions, in some little anxiety, awaited the event.

At length, he again left them in his search, and the Knight stepped after him to inquire the meaning of the delay.

The Robber stopped and turned. "On your life," he said "move not from the spot on which you stand. Our hope of egress and escape is over if you change your position in this vast hall. I have failed in finding the line which affords us the right clue from this part of the cave. The opposite side yonder is like a honey-comb, but by one only of its narrow openings can we hope to find the entrance to liberty."

Silently and carefully the Knight returned to the side of the lady. Their position was a fearful one, and spite of the angry feelings with which he now regarded her, he felt it his duty to endeavour to reassure and comfort her.

Almost unconsciously he found he had possession of her diminutive hand in his own iron gauntlet. 'Twas a rude prison for so soft and delicate a captive. No word had passed between them since the *éclaircissement* between herself and the robber-chief. The Knight felt, however, unable to resist the impulse, and carried the snowy offering to his lips.

The situation, indeed, was not without its charm. The head of the lady drooped upon the Knight's shoulder. He felt that she was sinking to the ground; and as his arm encircled her waist, and he laid her gently upon the floor of the cavern, he discovered that she had fainted. The next moment, as he was about to rise from his kneeling posture, in order to call the Captain to her aid, on putting

his hand to the ground he clutched a cord: the secret clue of the cavern.

To call cautiously to the Captain was work of a moment. A few whispered informed him that, through fear and a their charge had fainted. The Robber stepped and seizing her in his arms, gave the the Knight, and they quickly gained the passage which led them to the mouth cavern.

The mouth of this curious refuge artfully concealed by nature that, except banditti themselves, and a few of the people of the neighbourhood, who participated secret and were in the interest of the it was quite unknown. It was access a trap-door situate in the bottom of hollow, and completely shrouded and entered by thick and tangled bushes, in themselves perfect maze to the uninitiated.

“ A subtle pit,
Whose mouth was covered with rude-growing b

On gaining the interior, and after a

descent of some dozen wide steps from the trap, was a large chamber in which the geologists of the present day would have found an endless source of contemplation and delight, for in its sandy recesses were to be seen the skeletons of numerous beasts of prey and their victims of a former world. Here the bones of the hyena were mingled with the lesser remains of the fox, the wolf, and other animals. It was in this chamber that the robbers kept what few steeds they were possessed of, and which were stabled there for the very sufficient reason, that, in consequence of the narrowness of the passage leading to the further recesses of the cavern, it was impossible for aught larger than a human being to traverse its windings. Here also were kept the various disguises in use, and a guard, consisting of four of the band, was always on duty at this part.

The appearance of the Captain and his companions excited no surprise in the men stationed there, for they naturally supposed that

scout to induce himself in one
kept in readiness for the purp
noitre the vicinity of their hidi
himself and his companions e
done, the horses were led up
thence into the bottom of the
the party mounted, and the C
the way up by a narrow pat
thick bushes, in a few minute
travellers in the wood.

After so long a sojourn in th
earth, even the gloom of the thic
seemed a heaven of light and
maiden and the young Knight.
day when they emerged, and th
softened in the subdued light,
ing endless on every side, v

scenery of the trees, presented a delicious picture to their eyes.

"Their horses' hoof-tread seemed too rude,
So stillly was the solitude."

The events of the last few hours had so completely taken the Knight by surprise that he felt somewhat constrained in the company of his youthful fellow-traveller. Towards the robber-chieftain—whose noble figure and gallant appearance, as he now beheld him mounted upon a goodly steed, he could not but admire—he began to feel an increasing aversion; more especially when he found that the chief appeared to assume a sort of right to be the exclusive protector of her he himself still regarded with feelings of love. Willingly, as he observed the continuance of their somewhat mysterious intimacy, could he have wheeled his steed, and couching lance have commanded him either to leave the girl to the exclusive guidance of himself, or stand the back of his encounter. But courtesy towards her to whom he was already indebted, both on

the score of hospitality and subsequent service, held him silent.

The safe-conduct of the chief was likewise still necessary to their extrication from the labyrinths of the forest, since it became apparent, that unaided by his presence and escort, they might haply have been again captured by outlying parties of his company. In their progress through the forest this became more evident, as the Knight could hardly fail of observing that several men emerged from the thick underwood on either side the track they were pursuing, but, on a signal from their conductor, instantly dived into the covert and vanished.

At length they came to a more open space, in the midst of which an enormous oak threw its mossed boughs over a delicious carpet of greensward; and here the robber drew bridle, and halting, addressed himself to the Knight.

"Here, my Lord," he said, "we must separate. Our paths to-day, as through life, run in different directions. You are now safe from

all interference from those members of my band who occupy the forest, and a few hours' ride will take you to the English camp."

"In my own person, and in the name of the faithful friend whose care and attention has saved me from death," answered the Knight, "I thank thee, Sir Outlaw; and should fate ever make it necessary for thee to seek a friend, be assured I will use my utmost endeavours to serve thee."

As the Knight made his adieux to the robber, he spurred his steed to the lady's side, and took her bridle-rein in his hand to lead her onwards in her journey. But the outlaw also placed his hand upon her palfrey's rein.

"Pardon me, Sir Knight," he said; "the lady remains under my charge."

"How," exclaimed the other, at once commencing the quarrel he was not sorry to find, and unsheathing his weapon, "thou scarce wouldst have the hardihood to attempt detaining this lady against her will?"

The robber smiled as he gazed upon the excited champion.

"Were I to do so," he remarked, "believe me I have sufficient power in my own domain here to make good that attempt. But I scorn putting restraints upon a fair lady's slightest wish. Put up your sword, Sir Knight, and ask herself which she chooses for her future guardian—the proud Norman noble or the degraded outlaw of the forest."

The maiden covered her face with her hands, and then, as her tears fell fast, she addressed herself to the robber-chief.

"We cannot part so," she said; "you will suffer me to tell him why I am fain to choose thus!"

"It may not be," returned the Robber, aside; "my story cannot be told without drawing down danger upon us both. Believe me, I know these Norman nobles better than thou dost.—'Tis better as it is."

"Farewell, then, Sir Knight," she said, turning to Lord Folkstone, whilst tears streamed down her face; "you will sometimes remember your poor attendant."

The Knight took her proffered hand.

"It is not—it cannot be possible," he said, "that you willingly place yourself under the protection of this rude man. Speak but the word, and in one instant I will free you from his power."

"Such word," said the weeping maiden, "must be never spoken by me. Freely and with my own consent I choose him for my guardian."

The Knight waited to hear no more. He turned his steed, and dashing the spurs into his flanks galloped along the road the outlaw and pointed out as leading to the English camp.

CHAPTER XII.

For I must talk of murder,
Acts black as night, abominable deeds,
Complots of mischief, treason, villanies,
Ruthful to hear, yet piteously performed.

SHAKESPEARE.

WE must now again ask our readers to accompany us to the dungeon of the unhappy Arthur, in order that we may behold him sunk into a more hopeless state of misery than he had even before experienced.

He was alone; deep in the vaults of the castle of Rouen. His very whereabouts was unknown save to his relentless uncle and the vile Mauluc. The iron had entered deeply into his soul. Only the clanking stride of his stern jailor once in the twenty-four hours proclaimed to him that he still had communication with the world above. Its light, its

ear air, the seasons' difference, nay, almost the power of distinguishing night from day, were gone; whilst above the vault in which he was confined, the feast, the revel, and the brilliant ball were held.

The King once more feasted his nobles in the castle-hall. The tables groaned with viands, and the sparkling wine passed swiftly amidst the hum of converse; and the shout, the laugh, and the merry jest were heard above the clang and clatter of the feast. The kettle-drum rolled and rattled in that arched hall; the trumpet ever and anon brayed out the triumph of the royal pledge; the proud banners of ancestral chivalry trembled aloft with the vibration of the sounds; and all seemed joy and excess of mirth and happiness where regal pomp and military grandeur went hand in hand with the smiles of beauty, the soft strains of floating minstrelsy, feasting, and revelry.

The sharp pangs of remorse, however, are felt by the vicious even amidst their choicest

pleasures. As the night wore on the dark features of the King, during this scene of splendour, bore an anxious and care-worn appearance. He felt that his bearing was remarked by those immediately around, and imbibed some large draughts of wine till his brain reeled.

Walter Maule now his equerry, was by his side. He observed the distempered humour of his master; and like the attendant demon of some mortal of whose soul he had made prize, he drew him on to the point he wished to reach.

"Your Highness," he said, "finds this crowded hall too hot. Suffer me to attend you to the pleasure: perhaps a turn or two in the cool night air might revive you."

"There is a fever in my veins, good Maule," replied the King, "which is only to be allayed by blood. Enough, my friend; you understand me?"

As he said this, at the same time pointing with his finger to the dungeon beneath, the countenance of John presented an expression

of horror which almost startled Mauluc. The squerry pressed nearer to the King's side, and continued the conversation in tones so low that only themselves could hear its import. The King leant back beneath the canopy of costly state as he listened. His dark eye lowered, and then rolled wildly. Suddenly he rose, and, accompanied by Mauluc, who glided after him like his evil genius, he quietly stole from the hall.

Meanwhile, amid the full tide of revelry and enjoyment, the royal absence was scarcely remarked. The jester, Gondibert, alone noticed the flash of the King's jewelled robe as he rose from his throne, turned, and vanished from the hall by a small door situated close behind where he had been sitting. Mauluc cast a hasty glance around ere he followed; he then as quickly vanished.

As the midnight bell sounded on "unto the drowsy race of night," still continued that scene of revelry in the great hall of the castle of Louen. The youthful knight shouted, clapped his hands, and pledged the mistress of his

heart; the bearded baron whispered the fears of the coming storm in the ear of his neighbour; the gay esquire listened to the tales of fame; whilst minstrels touched the strings of their instruments as they sang the latest story. The palmer, gaunt and travel-worn—licensed and cherished even in the palace of royalty for the news he brought,—leaned on his staff, and told the fate of the crusade and the chance to his next of kin; whilst, in the hour of their enjoyment, “a deed of note,” fit only for “the dunnest smol,” was enacting beneath the very apartments of the castle in which they revelled.

CHAPTER XIII.

MURDER MOST FOUL.

Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts,
And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full
Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood;
Stop up the access and passage of remorse,
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose.

Now, o'er the one-half world
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtain'd sleep; now witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecate's offerings; and wither'd murder,
Alarum'd by his sentinel the wolf,
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
Moves like a ghost.

SHAKESPERE.

ON that night, whilst the inhabitants of
ouen were for the most part wrapped in
umber, as the waters of the Seine rippled
gainst the walls of the castle, two figures

emerged from a dark postern, and hastily embarked in a small boat. Both were muffled in the long mantle of the period, a garment similar to that worn by the Knight Templars, but without the red cross on the shoulder.

As soon as their craft was unmoored, they pulled close under the shadow of the battlements, until they came to that part of the fortress in which the prisons were situated. They then turned under a low and black-looking arch, whose rusty portcullis constrained them to lower their crests, as they shot into its dark jaws. Here they lay upon their oars for a brief space, whilst they struck a light and ignited a torch they had brought with them. They then turned the prow of their craft down a cavernous tunnel, which ran beneath the fortress, and stopped beside a flight of some half dozen stairs leading into the slimy vaults and dungeons.

After securing their boat, the rower stepped upon the stone stairs and received the torch from his companion. As he held it on high its lurid glare revealed before him the dark

recesses of the fearful cells with which the place was accommodated ; whilst in rear, its light was reflected in the sable stream ; and as the bearer ascended the flight of steps, and unlocked a door situated a few paces from the top, the glitter of a knight's golden spur was visible beneath his ample garment.

Scarce a word had been uttered by either of the occupants of the boat up to the moment it had been guided into the dismal cavern, which was a secret entrance to the prisons of the condemned, beneath the towers of Rouen. Shaded by the inky cloak of night, with no witness to their fell and cruel purpose, concealed in the cavernous and secret vaults, where they thought no eye could penetrate, John and his vile equerry sought the dungeon of the unhappy Arthur. The Prince was asleep when Mauluc entered his cell. Shaking him by the shoulder, the Knight ordered him, in a hollow voice, to arise and follow.

The hour of the night, and former scenes of horror, filled the unhappy youth with so much terror, that he was at first unable to obey.

There was that, however, in the voice of Maurice which plainly indicated to the prisoner that he must make the effort. The Eymery stood with his torch in one hand, the other pointing to the door. Words seemed an effort to him and his countenance and complexion were those of a livid corpse.

"Whether would you lead me, at this hour?" said the Prince.

"To one whose behest must not be gained," returned Mauluc.

"Ah me! my dreaded uncle!" exclaimed Arthur. "O! save me, Sir Knight; save me from his cruel hands."

"I have neither the power nor the will to do so," returned Mauluc. "Follow, and plead your cause to himself."

"Is there, then, no hope of escape?" cried the Prince despairingly. "No pity in man?"

"None," replied Mauluc sternly, advancing and grasping the collar of the youth's doublet. "Come forth, I say; I have no time for parley."

The long continuance of his confinement.

change from dungeon to dungeon, had completely subdued the Prince's spirit, so he offered little or no resistance to the violent Mauluc; but half dragged, half led on the steps which descended from his prison, he was forced into the boat, where stood his unnatural uncle.

A single glance at the lowering features of the King sufficed to show him there was small hope of mercy at his hands. The hollow echo, the reverberation of his own and Mauluc's steps, as they stepped into the craft, which betrayed his bitterest enemy—the flash of torch-light in the dark waters flowing through the cavernous passage—all filled him with horror. He felt his last hour was come, and that he must die horridly, unnaturally, by the hands of these butchers, and in this dreadful place. All the Plantagenet spirit seemed fled from the Prince, and throwing himself upon his knees, he clutched his uncle's garment and begged for mercy.

"Oh, mine uncle!" he exclaimed; "spare

thy brother's son! Oh, spare thy a
Spare thy race*!"

"Arthur of Bretagne!" answered J
this piteous prayer, at the same time
ing his sword, "we offered thee fair!
thou refusedst our proffered love. T
too late to plead for mercy at our
Leave thy grasp upon our tunic."

"Oh, for dear God's sake, uncle,"
pleaded Arthur, "as you hope for me
Heaven hereafter, kill me not in this d
place."

"Hence, fool!" said John, drawing b
arm. "Pluck him, Sir Walter, from m

Mauluc drew the Prince suddenly
ward, and the King in an instant plun
weapon into the body of the unhappy y

The Prince uttered a piercing shri
struggled to rise from the bottom of th
But the King placed his foot up

* John had no children at this time by Is
Angoulême, so that when he had murdered Arthur
(for the time) the sole representative of the house
Plantagenet.

reast, and thrusting him down, again and again struck the weapon through him as he lay.

A deep groan sounded along the vault, and all was over. The unhappy Arthur, deluged in blood, lay a corpse in the boat.

No sooner was the deed executed, than the guilty pair were seized with dread. The end was attained which John had so long worked for, and had been unable to compass except by himself becoming the butcher of an innocent child; for even the dark Mauluc, although promised the heiress of Mulgrief as the assassin's fee, shrank from perpetration of the deed. He had urged on the King to its commission, and even brought him to the secret prison-house of the Prince in order to imbrue his hands in blood; but he was too wary to be himself the executor of the villanous act. He so well knew the nature of his employer. At the moment, the pair stood aghast, and listened to the echo of the dripping water, as it fell, drop by drop, from the damp roof and sides of the cavern. The noise of the death-

struggle had subsided into the deep silence of the vaults. And the eyes of both the assassins were in the moment directed upon the corpse in the centre. Suddenly a sound, as of some one upon the steps of the dungeon, recalled them to themselves.

"Hark!" said Martin, turning suddenly; "what sounds were those?" As he looked towards the doorway which led to the prisons he beheld a dark shadow upon the walls. The next moment he plunged the torch he held into the screen, and they were enveloped in utter darkness.

"Haste!" exclaimed John, in mental terror, and seizing one of the oars, "pull, good Walter. Let us leave this place of death. I feel oppressed as if breathing the close vapours of hell. Pull for the open river, Sir Knight, for the love of Heaven."

Martin, nothing loth to leave the dismal vault, endeavoured to find the oar. As he did so his hand encountered the gory body of the murdered Prince. He shuddered as he felt the warm blood; and clutching the oar with

embling hands, pulled for the stream. The guilty pair felt their courage revive as they found themselves again in the clear air, and beneath the canopy of heaven.

A heavy stone had been prepared by Mauluc, by passing a strong cord over it. This, with tremulous haste, they fastened around the dead body of the Prince, with some little difficulty heaving it over the side of the boat to the depths of the Seine. The corpse plunged heavily into the dark waters, and sank to the bottom, whilst the murderers watched for a few moments the bubbles which rose upon the surface.

"Thus perish all record of this night's business," said John, drawing a long breath.

"And so perish all your Highness's cares," added Mauluc.

The pair then once more seized the oars, and hastily rowed to the spot from whence they had started on this fearful enterprise.

Vain, however, are the deepest-laid schemes of man. The All-wise Being permits not the

devices of the villanous to be hidden from the open world:—

“ Foul deeds will rise,
Though all the world o'erwhelm them to men's eyes.”

Their hands, trembling with guilt and horror, had failed to secure the cord which attached the stone to the dead body, and ere they themselves had well landed, it rose again to the surface, and, before morning dawned, was washed on shore on the opposite side of the river.

Meanwhile, John and his companion landed stealthily on the little quay which was situate at the private stairs leading from the water-tower of the castle; and in order to obliterate, as they thought, all trace of their night's excursion, they scuttled with their swords the small craft, and sank her. They then hastened into the castle, and shutting themselves up in the King's private apartment, spent the remainder of the night in terror, afraid to separate until the rising dawn somewhat repaired their conscience-stricken souls.

Sir Walter Mauluc vainly imagined he had at least so well arranged matters that no suspicion of their intent could arise, and that by perpetrating the deed in the darkness and secrecy of the vaults beneath the castle, no prying eye could by possibility glance at their proceedings. Such, however, was not to be the case; for a dark suspicion of the King's intent had lain like a weight upon the mind of the Jester Gondibert, ever since Hubert had possessed him with the recent atrocities perpetrated upon the Prince whilst a prisoner at Falaise.

Gondibert had accordingly registered a vow at the altar to save the Prince if possible, and had spared no pains to discover his whereabouts during the short time he had sojourned at Rouen. Had any of the usual jailers of the castle been employed in the safe custody of the Prince, the quick wit of the Jester might, perhaps, have discovered the ill-fated Arthur, and assisted in his escape. As it was, the wily Gondibert had been baffled in all his attempts. On this eventful night, however, he

had learned that some unhappy p confined in a place called the W—one of the most dismal prisons of of Rouen; and the captive thus ca cealed, he immediately concluded unhappy Prince. It was only on ing of the murder that Gondibert h himself of this, and he resolved the deliverance of the captive durin Accordingly, observing the departu and Mauluc, by virtue of the sign had received from the minstrel, he the lonely vaults beneath the c came, however, too late to save, al too late to witness, the horrid sce described; and it was the shadow o as he escaped horror-stricken from abutment where he had concealed h Mauluc had remarked when he e the torch in the stream.

Struck with terror at what h witnessed, Gondibert resolved to place which contained wretches ca dreadful a deed, and, hardly knowi

he bent his steps, he rushed down to the water-side, threw himself into a boat, and crossing the stream entered the Abbey of Bec, whilst the monks were engaged at a midnight mass.

Gondibert had no great opinion of the clergy of his time, knowing rather too much of their vagaries, and the luxurious lives they oftentimes led. At the present moment, however, as he thought he might experience some sort of consolation and relief from holy counsel, he resolved to seek benefit of clergy, and by a full confession of all he had witnessed, relieve his mind.

"Oh! holy Father Abbot," he said, advancing and throwing himself upon his knees, before the Superior of the establishment, "receive the confession of one of the wicked."

"What heavy sin thus moves thee, my son?" inquired the Abbot, "thou art not wont to be thus perturbed."

"Man was born in sin," replied Gondibert; "and were the lives only of the most innocent of us prolonged, I am persuaded it would be quickly necessary again to drown or to burn the world; for earth would become a hell.

Listen, Reverend Father, and judge for yourself."

The Abbot of Bec recoiled with horror, as he listened to the recital of the startled Gondibert. "Holy St. Agatha! patron saint of my convent," he said; "but what a dreadful tale is this thou hast related! Thou surely art wandering from the truth, good man, and putting a jest upon me. But no; thy pallid and scared look is voucher for thy good faith. Yet can I hardly believe such villany to be in the heart of a king."

The Jester spent some hours with the abbot after this confession. His mind had been so much unhinged by the terrible disclosure he had witnessed, that it required all the caution of that holy man could afford, to treat his perturbed spirit. In fact, the clergyman began shrewdly to suspect, from the manner in which Gondibert called up the names of the saints in the calendar to do vengeance on the King and his vile accomplices, that

not altogether impossible the whole matter might be the coinage of the Jester's over-heated brain.

Under this idea, and impressing upon Gondibert the propriety of not giving utterance to his indignation, lest there might be some mistake in the matter, the abbot led him to the gates of the convent, and was about to dismiss him at the river's bank, when, as if in confirmation of the Jester's words, and as though Heaven had cast up its own witness, the swollen body of the murdered Prince was thrown on shore by the waves, at their very feet*.

* The Monks of Margan mentioned in their brief yearly notes, that "although the body of the murdered Prince had been thrown into the Seine, with heavy stones fastened to it, yet that it was, notwithstanding, cast on shore, and secretly buried, for fear of the tyrant."

END OF VOL. II.

LONDON:
Printed by Schulze & Co., 13, Poland

JOHN OF ENGLAND.

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

BY HENRY CURLING,

AUTHOR OF

“THE SOLDIER OF FORTUNE.”

Now powers from home, and discontents at home,
Meet in one line; and vast confusion waits
(As doth a raven on a sick-fallen beast),
The imminent decay of wrested pomp.
Now happy he whose cloak and cincture can
Hold out this tempest.
A thousand businesses are brief in hand.
And heaven itself doth frown upon the land.

KING JOHN.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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JOHN OF ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.

A RESCUE.

What! am I dar'd, and bearded to my face?—
Draw, men, for all this privileged place;
Blue coats or tawney coats.

A rope! a rope!—
Now beat them hence; why do you let them stay?
Thee I'll chase hence, thou wolf in sheep's array.—
Out, tawney coats!—out, scarlet hypocrite!

SHAKESPEARE.

ISABELLA of Angoulême had not borne her husband an heir when the young Arthur was thus foully done to death; so that John, in destroying this scion of Plantagenet, had left himself the sole representative of that heroic race. The beautiful queen, who at this period suffered from frequent attacks of illness, was again absent from John's court, so that he had not the consolation of her society during the

first hours of remorse, after performing the
deed which had narrated in our preceding chap-
ter. The temper of the monarch, which we
have already said was subject to periodical
attacks of alternate deep gloom and outrage-
ous violence, after the murder of Arthur became
for a time so ungovernable, that few except
the hired villains and mercenaries it was his
pleasure to keep as his immediate guards and
attendants, together with the villain Mauluc,
 dared to appear before him. In this state, secretly
despised by mankind, he gave way to tem-
pests of fury which seemed to unsettle his rea-
son. He executed all who appeared in his pre-
sence, struck his attendants, and even cursed the
hour of his own birth, seizing his garments with
his teeth and tearing them with ungovernable
rage, as if possessed by furies. In this sit-
uation of affairs, Mauluc took upon himself to
despatch an escort for the Queen, hoping her
presence might somewhat calm the dis-
tempered rage of the monarch.

Isabella had no great reason to entertain any
tender feelings towards her royal consort,
when he had forced her to break with the monarch.

she really loved, and accept himself. For, as Lord Paramount of Aquitaine, he could have rendered invalid any wedlock the heiress of the Anjouvains might have contracted without his consent. Had she, therefore, remained firm to her first love, he would have declared her fief forfeited for disobedience to himself, her immediate lord.

John, who had been deeply enamoured of her for some time after their marriage, had of late grown somewhat jealous and discontented, which had destroyed the little regard Isabella felt for her husband, and she was now about to behold him in a more detestable light as the murderer of his own nephew. Isabella, however, notwithstanding the sensation of disgust with which, in common with all mankind, she must have regarded John, concealed the feelings of her heart, and her presence and influence somewhat calmed his perturbed spirits.

She arrived and presented herself before him in all the splendour of her beauty, and, notwithstanding the depth of guilt into which he had plunged, took upon herself the task of recon-

ciling him to his immediate attendants, many of whom he had confined in the castle-dungeons, and she eventually succeeded in bringing him to something like a human condition. This was immediately perceptible to all around, for he quickly entered into society and gave himself up to the career of indolent voluptuousness in which it was his delight to indulge, and which so ill accorded with the dispositions of the stern and warlike nobles of his court.

In that era, men rose before the sun, dined at ten, and were frequently, with little intermission, in their saddles the whole day. The lascivious John, however, strove to bring in the fashion of lying in bed till mid-day, and was accordingly as unpopular amongst his barons for effeminacy and indolence as for the viler crimes he scrupled not to commit.

Whilst then, by the murder of his nephew, John was at this moment losing one-third of his domains at a blow, he was revelling in feasts and balls. He appeared, indeed, since the perpetration of that crime, to have become more reckless of men's opinion than ever. The part of the barons engaged with him

as foreign wars, struck with horror at his conduct, were only hindered at the moment from falling from him, by their allegiance, and the high sense of duty and loyalty towards him who wore the triple crowns of England, Aquitaine, and Normandy; and thus the mysterious chain of feudality held many who would otherwise have spurned his service.

Few even of the iron nobles of that age durst venture to express their feelings to a crowned King, however much they might find themselves aggrieved. There was one, however, who, although merely a Kentish knight, possessed, when fairly aroused, so fierce a spirit that no fear of consequences could restrain him from bearding the tiger even in his den. Like the noble *Cœur-de-lion*, his former companion in arms, he possessed a soul so chivalrous and dauntless that, rather than step aside from the paths of honour and rectitude, he would have consented to be torn to pieces without a murmur.

Sir Gilbert Daundelyonne, whom we have before seen employed upon a secret service by the King and then left to his fate, through

the instrumentality and timely succour of the brave Salisbury, had been enabled to escape; and now suddenly appearing at Court, the first time, learned the news of his daughter's disappearance. The King was at dinner when the Daundelyonne and his small party, gaunt with famine, and their whole equipage showing the desperate nature of their defence, made their appearance.

Five hundred knights and nobles, and a brilliant assemblage of ladies graced the hall in which the King feasted on this occasion. The stately Knight, who felt some touches of resentment against his royal master on account of the slight put upon him during his recent service, no sooner received intelligence of his daughter's flight, with a hint of its supposed cause, than he felt himself so foully dishonoured that, accoutred as he was and accompanied by two of his followers, he strode into the banquetting-hall and, without even unhelming, confronted the King as he sat amongst his guests.

The royal banquet was just over, and John, with the beautiful Isabella by his side, was in

the full tide of enjoyment; sparkling wine, martial strains, and brilliant converse for the moment, seducing him from fouler thoughts and more ugly conceptions. When suddenly raising his head, after a violent fit of laughter at a sally of the principal court-fool, he beheld the grim figure of Sir Gilbert Daundelyonne standing like a pillar of iron, and regarding him with a steady gaze through the bars of his helmet.

It was so much the custom for the employés of the monarch to have access to him at all hours, that those in immediate attendance had not questioned the Knight's approach, and John, with the career of laughter suddenly cut short by this apparition in war-worn coat and closed visor, regarded him for a brief space in some astonishment. The torn and disfigured surcoat of the stern Knight bearing no impress of his arms, and the crest being riven from his helm.

"Holy St. Withold!" exclaimed John, as he shrank under the stern gaze of the gigantic Daundelyonne, "what sturdy guest hath thus unbidden graced our feast? Speak, Sir War-

rior, who, in the foul fiend's name, gave thee permission thus to intrude upon our presence, and what seek ye here?"

"John of England," replied the Knight, "I am one of the few remaining followers of your heroic brother Richard, a poor knight of Kent, called Daundelyonne. For what I seek here, it is a beloved daughter whom I demand at your hands unscathed and unspotted as I left her, or failing in having her so delivered to me, I will offer her a bleeding sacrifice here before ye."

"Now, by our Lady's grace!" said John, who was always wanting in courage when fairly bearded; "now, by our Lady's grace, Sir Knight, you ask that of us, in which we cannot well accommodate you. We know nothing of the fair Bertha since she hath fled from our Court."

"How!" exclaimed the Knight, "what villain hath dared to force the daughter of a Daundelyonne to such a measure, Sir King?"

"We are not used to be thus questioned," said John, somewhat recovering himself. "Hence, sirrah: quit the presence whilst we

cense your departure. For your daughter, and whom we graced by employment in our Court, earn to your mere confusion, that she hath led scandalously from our royal care in company with a horseboy or page,—a varlet of our own household.”

“O King,” said the Daundelyonne, “foul-mouthed, slanderous, and dishonoured as thou art, whose service is disgrace, and whose reward for truth and loyalty is ignominy and shame, behold, I cast my gauntlet at thy feet, in token I will cram the lie thou hast just now uttered down the throat of any champion thou canst find base enough again to avouch it.”

Thus saying, the furious Daundelyonne, having his iron glove from his hand, cast it on the pavement before him; the assembled guests gazing in breathless astonishment, whilst the deepest silence reigned around.

“But no,” continued the fierce Knight, after a short pause, to see if any one replied to his challenge, “there is no such champion here. There is no Knight present, John of England, who would scruple to tell thee, that the honour

of a lady confided to thy charge should have been considered as a delicate flower, which the least breath of detraction or calumny would wither and destroy."

The rage of John had risen to so great a pitch during this address, that he was unable to speak; but throwing himself back in his seat, he had endured the Knight's wrath in a state of mute astonishment.

After somewhat recovering from the amazement the Knight's hardihood had produced however, he glanced around, and beckoned to his equerry to approach.

"Now, by Saint Radenegonde of Poitiers," he muttered, "but this insolence passes all I have ever heard of. Sir Walter de Mauluc," he continued, in somewhat bolder tones, "arrest that base scum of Kent on the instant."

Mauluc upon this, followed by several of the guards, rushed forward to execute the King's commands; but the Knight of Daundelyon dealt him a blow in the teeth, which sent him reeling, and drawing his huge blade, opposed himself to the guards, who paused at his threatening aspect.

"Ha!" exclaimed John, drawing back, "have we treason so near us? Rise, gentlemen all, and secure this bold traitor."

The hall was by this time in a state of dire confusion. Many of the nobles present, who had felt themselves aggrieved by the King's conduct on former occasions, although they durst not espouse the fierce Knight's cause, thus inconsiderately and violently urged, sat neuter; others again seemed inclined openly to avouch his right in the matter. The majority, however, drew their weapons and closed round the King, whilst the guard eventually overpowered and arrested the Knight of Daunleynne.

"Hence with him," cried the furious John, as soon as he saw him secured, "convey the Kentish maniac without the castle walls; there let him be shrived and hanged. Sir Walter de Mauluc," continued the King, "thou bearest upon thy visage the impress of the lion's claws; we give thee in recompense the office of seeing the beast deprived of his fangs."

The Knight was quickly hurried from the hall, under a strong escort of Brabançon men-

at-arms; and being placed in a sort of tumbril, was conveyed without the castle-walls, where, whilst a gibbet was being erected, he was allowed the attendance of a priest from the neighbouring convent that he might confess his sins.

Gondibert the jester, who had been present in the hall during this scene, and had beheld with dismay the situation of the good Knight his friend, followed to the place of execution, and mingling amongst the crowd collected there, addressed himself to some of the Kentish archers. To these men he communicated the fact, that the person thus ignominiously about to be executed like some common felon, was their old leader the Knight of Daundelyonne. The intelligence speedily created a lively sensation amongst the bold yeomen of Thanet; so that, whilst many of those present strung their bows and prepared for a rescue, others made for the suburb, where the entire body of the archers of Kent were quartered, and the whole banding together, drew their bow-strings to their ears, and demanded that their old leader should either be given up to them, or they

would send a shower amongst the Brabançon men-at-arms.

Between the foreign mercenaries and the English men-at-arms there was always ill blood. Even in the stricken field it was sometimes hard to restrain the blunt Englishmen from showing their contempt of the foreigner. The Kentish archers bore in their appearance the signs of their Saxon descent. Gigantic stature, with their fair sunny hair, round rosy cheeks and high features, they usually came to the contest in their own dogged and peculiarly English style, sending such clouds of arrows amongst their foes, that nothing could well stand before them unless lapped in proof; and when they threw aside their bows and advanced into the *mêlée* with the heavy bills or short blades they carried at their sides, they mowed down their enemies with the same *vingt froid* with which the reaper crops the ripened corn.

At the present moment, the English troops were not in the best mood. They were stung with the remarks they had heard on all sides upon the conduct of their King.

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“ Young Arthur’s death was common in their mouths,
And when they spoke of him, they shook their heads,
And whispered one another in the ear;
And he that spoke did gripe the hearer’s wrist,
Whilst he that heard made fearful action,
With wrinkled brows, with nods, with rolling eyes.”

The mercenaries, meantime, who were mostly equipped in chain-mail, seemed determined to execute their orders in spite of the English archers; and many of them being mounted, drew closely around the prisoner, and refused to deliver him up. They also despatched messengers to the King demanding a stronger body to enable them to carry his orders into execution; whilst a party of the grooms and attendants of the Brabançon Knights, whose quarters were just without the castle-walls also followed their comrades, and a tremendous uproar took place; in the midst of which the Knight of Daundelyonne was borne to the gibbet.

The archers had, however, so bestirred themselves, that they had collected nearly four thousand of their comrades, and prepared to strike in upon the mercenaries and carry off their leader. At this moment, John issued

from the gates of the castle, and accompanied by many of his guests mounted on horseback, attempted to restrain the fury of his English subjects, bidding them, on their allegiance, to remain quiet spectators of the execution about to take place.

Seeing that the King was only gaining time, whilst a large body of horse were issuing from the castle, the archers drew their arrows to the head, and shot at all indiscriminately who were opposed to them, so that the King finding himself in great danger, turned his steed and dropped off, followed by most of his party, whose gay banquetting costume was indeed ill adapted to withstand the cloth-yard shafts of the men of Kent.

In the midst of this scene of confusion, De laus, who had recovered from his wound, quietly stole in amongst the Brabançon men-at-arms, and attempted to put an end to the tumult by giving his aid to the executioner, and hanging the prisoner out of the way, at the same time that a strong reinforcement of mercenaries galloped from the castle, and were down upon the English archers. The

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prisoner was, therefore, at this moment in considerable jeopardy, although he possessed so powerful a body of friends; for whilst the archers shot their arrows so thickly against their opponents that they forced them to give ground, they themselves were so cooped up in the thoroughfare where the fray was taking place, that their numbers were of little avail: and a few minutes would have sufficed to see the brave Daundelyonne swinging in the air, had it not been for the jester Gondibert and a strange man clad in a rusty suit of mail, who at this moment appeared upon the stage.

These two by thrusting themselves amongst the horsemen crowded around, and at the risk of having their brains dashed out by an iron mace, diving under the bellies of the horses and forcing themselves through the press managed to reach the gibbet.

No sooner had they done so than, as if by a concerted signal, a swarthy-looking band of some twenty ill-accounted ruffians, their arms and weapons smeared with grease, and themselves umbered with some sooty composition, suddenly attacked the guard on the castle

side. Whilst this was taking place, a division of the archers, throwing down their bows, advanced steadily from the opposite quarter, and with measured tread striking right and left amongst the horsemen, with their murderous bills cleared a lane towards the place of execution.

At this moment, Gondibert cut the thong which secured Sir Gilbert Daundelyonne's arms, and his companion of the rusty harness with a heavy blow struck De Bossu to the earth. The Knight instantly seizing the sword with which the Bravo was armed, assailed the surrounding Brabançons with such tremendous fury that he appeared resolved to do away the shame of the situation to which he had been reduced, upon their heads.

A few minutes more and the prisoner and his two rescuers had vanished, leaving no sign by which they were to be discovered, whilst the mercenaries were fain to retire slowly before their opponents, and take shelter within the court-yard of the castle.

The King was dreadfully enraged at this outbreak, which feelingly persuaded him of the

summons in which he was held by his English subjects. He instantly gave orders that the city gates should be closed and strictly guarded, whilst he instituted a search through the town for the prisoner and his two friends. However he could not discover the slightest trace of their whereabouts.

The angry rioters effectually broke up the sacrament which was to have taken place on the same night and John shut himself up in his apartment in a paroxysm of rage; whilst the rioters continuing banded together and under arms refused to disperse until they received a verbal promise of pardon for the outbreak—in testimony which the monarch was then, after much persuasion, to grant them.

CHAPTER II.

LOSS OF THE PLANTAGENET DOMINIONS.

How wildly then walks my estate in France.

SHAKESPEARE.

My honourable lords, health to you all!
Sad tidings bring I to you out of France,
Of loss, of slaughter, and discomfiture.
Guienne, Champagne, Rheims, Orleans,
Paris, Guysora, Poitiers, are all quite lost.

IBID.

THE outbreak and mutinous spirit displayed by the Kentish archers was but a type of the feeling which at the moment possessed the whole English power; for as it was well known to all men that John had murdered his nephew with his own hand, he had become an object of the blackest hatred of mankind.

The dead body of the murdered Prince, we have already said, was most singularly cast on shore. Notwithstanding the means used by the murderers to sink it in the stream, it

showed a ghastly evidence of their guilt, and being recognised, was buried at the Abbey of Bec.

In the dead of night and with the utmost secrecy was the body of the unfortunate Plantagenet committed to the cold tomb: no near relative, no sorrowing friend of the poor youth, being there to drop a tear upon his remains. The corpse was hurried into the grave by stranger monks, who in fear of the tyrant hastened the obsequies, and kept secret the place of sepulture*.

Notwithstanding, however, that John was detested by his subjects after this act, the proud, independent, and indomitable spirit of his English soldiers even yet stood him in stead: for, however much they despised him for his weakness and villany, they hated all foreigners even more, and being in a strange land in the midst of their foes: with the true English bull-dog spirit of their country, provided they had but employment in the field,

* The body of Arthur was cast on shore and buried at the abbey of Bec, secretly for fear of the tyrant, *propter metum tyranni*.—*ANN. DE MARGAN*, p. 13.

ey were content to forget the faults of their employer amidst the din of war, the hurry and excitement of action, and the pleasures of new scenes and achievements.

The Bretons, meanwhile, who were enraged and measure at the loss of their beloved king, swore a deadly revenge against John, waging incessant war, carried their complaints before Philip of France, as their liege lord. They demanded justice for the violence committed by John upon Arthur, an heir of the French crown, and his own nephew, with the aggravation that he was, in addition, the vassal of the English king, as charged, whom he was feudally bound to protect.

John, after his usual fashion, chose to disregard the tempest now raging around him, still giving way to his career of indolent voluptuousness, was surrounded by mercenaries and bravos; whilst those of his barons who still adhered to him, vainly opposed themselves to the storm which shook his continental possessions. The Queen-mother, who had suddenly relented in her feelings towards Arthur,

had sent repeated messages to John after he left Mirabeau, praying him to suspend his cruelties towards the young Prince. Like many another great sinner, she had suddenly become scrupulous and conscientious; and after a life spent in alternate war and pleasure, began to see the folly and vanity of her career. Accordingly, when the tidings reached her of the depth of guilt into which her son had plunged, she never from that moment was seen to smile.

John was at length fairly aroused from his lethargy, by hearing himself summoned by Philip of France, to stand his trial for felony and murder; and on his refusing to appear, finding himself adjudged to forfeit to his superior lord all his seigniories and fiefs in France.

Philip, in fact, seized the moment which once neglected, seldom returns. He saw that now was the time to make an effort against the odious John, and by expelling the English power from France, to annex to the crown the many considerable fiefs which so long had been dismembered from it. The abhorrence in

the English monarch was now regarded any of his Norman subjects was as good thousands on the side of France, many of great vassals of the English king falling him in his need: the Earls of Flanders and Blois, too, unluckily for John, were at this engaged in the Holy War. The Count of Flanders was an infant under Philip's guardianship; and whilst, even amongst his power, hostility and civil tumult reigned, enterprise succeeded against the English. The castles and fortresses beyond the Loire were quickly lost by the submission of the Count of Alençon to Philip, and for the moment the French king broke up his camp, in order to give his troops a short repose after fatigues of the campaign.

John, upon news of this, displayed one of his fits of alacrity for which he was celebrated. He suddenly shook off his apathy, leaving his "lascivious wassails," collected together his English troops, and like lightning rushed upon Alençon; so that Philip, whose army could not be brought together in time to succour the place, suddenly beheld

his new ally, the Count, in danger of falling into the hands of his wrathful foe.

Whilst these events were passing, a curious and romantic incident took place, which from its circumstance of chivalry, would seem almost to have belonged to those days of romance, in which Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table flourished in Christendom.

It happened that just at this time, a splendid tournament was held at Moret, in the Gatinois.

To this "gentle passage of arms" nearly all the knightly and noble of France, together with the brave, the beautiful, and chivalrous from many other countries were assembled. It was a gorgeous scene, and such as few folks in this dull, calculating, and common-place age can well imagine. The immense concourse of knights and nobles who had collected on the occasion, made it one of the grandest assemblages that had been seen for years. The tournament was to have lasted three days; but when the lists were filled with spectators, the knights and their attendants upon the plain, the combatants glaring at each other through the bars of their helmets, and the very signal

for the outset to be sounded, a faint and long-drawn blast was suddenly heard from without, and as the actors in this gorgeous pageant stood "with eye and ear attentive bent," like the *dramatis personæ* of some splendid tableau, the King of France, surrounded by his knights and attendants, suddenly galloped into the arena.

Philip, whom it has been the custom of most historians and novelists to describe as the mirror of chivalry, instantly craved assistance of the brilliant assemblage of knights and nobles who "all furnished, all in arms," stood around him in the listed field; and after a tremendous objurgation of the detested John, whom he denounced as a base and hateful assassin, the stain of arms and the disgrace of knighthood, he pointed out to them the plains of Alençon, as the most honourable field in which to display their prowess and generosity.

The proposal was received by the assembled knights with shouts of applause. Slowly and majestically the noble host closed their files, and in a dense column "with swords unhacked, and helmets all unbruised," the glittering throng,

gorgeous in appointment, and under command of Philip, instantly marched to raise the siege of Alençon.

John quailed at the sound of their approach, and despite the entreaties of his valiant kinsman Faulconbridge, who had but newly joined him from England, and who almost alone remained to bear the brunt of the coming strife, he fled hastily from the wrath to come. Nay, so hurried was the English king's flight, that his tents, machines, and baggage, fell into the hands of Philip*.

* It has been the fashion amongst historians and writers of the period, to set off this crafty King in contrast to his "brother of England:" in short, to make him out a pattern of regal excellence. We think, however, despite the brilliant virtues it has been the practice of poets and novellists to accord to Philip Augustus, that, taking into consideration his living during the age of chivalry, he displayed but a mean, pitiful, and hard-hearted spirit, little better, except that murder stuck not openly to his hands, than that of his English rival. Take, for instance, the villany of his behaviour towards the two beautiful women who were his wives. Decked in all the pride of chivalry, he had sought and married Inghorde, the lovely daughter of Woldemar, King of Denmark. With fetes, with triumphs, and with revelling, himself "apparelled as became the brave," (for he had met his bride in full armour,) he had married her one day, and caused her to be crowned on the day succeeding. On the third day, however, the fickle monarch, without the shadow of excuse, had repudiated her, sent her at the

The English monarch now again relapsed into his usual slothful indulgence, and after the effort we have described, he remained in total inactivity at Rouen, passing his time with the fair Isabella in pastimes and amusements, whilst the gallant Bastard, the noble Pembroke, and others of his barons, not entirely disgusted with his conduct, fought his battles for him, and played a losing game as best they might.

“Pah!” he said, vauntingly, on being urged

age of seventeen an exile to Flanders, and even kept her a close prisoner in the abbey of Assoin, near Lille, where, in an absolute state of disgraceful poverty, she was obliged to obtain her livelihood by the labour of her hands.

Succeeding in his object of obtaining a divorce, he next married Agnes de Meraine, a descendant of Charlemagne, a woman beautiful as she was gifted, graceful, and virtuous, and who was called “*La Fleur des Dames* ;” and to add to his nuptial joys he persecuted his former wife by sending her to a still more rigorous captivity in the dreary Chateau d’Etampes. After this, basely bending to the decree of Rome, he recalled the ill-used Ingborde, and suffered Agnes de Meraine to be disgraced and imprisoned in the Chateau de Poissy, where, in a few weeks, she died. To crown his unscrupulous conduct in his desire for a third wife, he even again confined the unhappy Ingborde in the Chateau d’Etampes.

Such was Philip Augustus, and whom it has been the fashion to cry up as a mirror of chivalry.

by several of his nobles to take the field and encounter the enemy in person,—“Pah! Let the French go on! When we *do* think fit to arouse ourselves, we will retake in a day what it costs them years to acquire.”

The Barons gazed upon each other in silent astonishment. They found their valour and conduct were wasted in the cause of a trifle. Gradually they drew off, and assembling their followers withdrew in silence and sorrow; and in a few short weeks many of the banners of the proudest in England floated over the keeps of their castles once more, and the Plantagenet dominions in France might be said from that moment to have been lost. Still, however, Chateau Guillard, which was situated partly on an island in the Seine, was gallantly defended by the constable of Chester, the determined Roger de Laice, who, at the head of a numerous garrison, baffled all the efforts of Philip to take it.

Under these circumstances, the French King resolved to reduce it by famine; and that he might cut off its communication with the neighbouring country, he threw a bridge across

ne, whilst he himself with his army
ed it by land. Pembroke and Faul-
ge, at the head of four thousand in-
and three thousand cavalry, swooped
Philip's camp in the night-time; and but
the failure of some flat-bottomed boats
ed previously ordered to sail up the
nd fall at the same moment on the
they would have succeeded in routing
nch.

was, the violence of the wind, and the
current of the Seine, retarded the vessels,
it was morning before they appeared;
embroke, although partially successful,
a to retire with considerable loss.

CHAPTER III.

The sun of heaven, methought, was loth to set;
But stay'd, and made the western welkin blush,
When the English measured backward their own ground,
In faint retire: O, bravely came we off,
When, with a volley of our needless shot,
After such bloody toil, we bid good night:
And wound our tatter'd colours slowly up,
Lest in the field, and almost lords of it.

SHAKESPEARE.

It was soon after the events we have just narrated that the sun went down fiery-red upon the stricken field near Falaise.

The day, as the great poet words it, had been "wondrous hot."

"Some airy devil hovered in the sky
And poured down mischief."

The English and Norman troops, although outnumbered and pressed hard by the French, had fought almost from sunrise with desperate

ned valour, bating no jot of ground to their
s. As the shadows of evening descended,
e overwearied combatants began slowly to
tire; and although here and there might
ve been seen whole masses of the splendid
valry of the period engaged in desperate and
adly strife, still the forces on either side
med tired of the contest. At a part of the
ld where the English infantry had been
awn up and made a desperate stand
ainst the French chivalry, some half a dozen
ks had been secured by an enormous iron
ain. The slaughter at this spot had been
rific; as from behind this iron barrier the
entish bowmen had plied their craft, although
peatedly charged by immense masses of
valry; and French and English lay together
absolute heaps, the slain having been indis-
minately piled upon each other by the
hers so as to form a breastwork against
se repeated attacks.

The gallant Faulconbridge, who had been
horsed here, having in the early part of
day brought succour to the men of Kent,
d performed prodigies of valour, fighting on

foot with his huge battle-axe like a common soldier. As the

"Light: thicken'd and the crow
Made wing to the rocky wood—"

the din of war grew less and less, and the trumpets of the several leaders sounding in different parts of the field, gave token that the closing day had well nigh separated the willing combatants.

Leaning upon his huge weapon, and almost alone amidst the slain, the gallant Bastard stood with one hand grasping the huge chain which bound the trees under which he stood. The visor of his helmet was up, and his expressive features, pallid with the day's toil, were somewhat raised as he watched the beauty of the sky after the sun's decline.

There is something singularly delicious in this witching hour on a fine evening. The air appears to breathe more wooingly; the landscape, umbered down, looks more lovely than at any other part of the twenty-four hours; wood and fell, hill and dale, softened as with the finishing brush of an artist, invite the eye to stray again and again over its

auties. The "things of day begin to droop and drowse;" the turmoil, the bustle, the business of the world to appear vain and ridiculous; some goddess of the groves and hills seems to claim the world for her silent reign; the elves and fairies to want their hour; and man's crimes and his villanies to have no longer permission openly to affront the earth's surface, ready cumbered with the remains of his life and folly.

Whilst Faulconbridge stood lost in contemplation, and gazed upon the bright and luminous track which formed the back-ground of the picture, his thoughts reverted to the fabled ages of the early world, when nymph and tyrant peopled such a scene.

To one like the gallant son of Cœur-de-lion, the hour and the landscape would have lost their charm, unless enjoyed under the present aspect. To him, all would have appeared tame and vapid had it not been attended with the circumstance, of war and chivalrous deed.

Faulconbridge stood almost alone during his reign of strife and misrule. He appeared to belong to no particular cast. A

soldier of fortune, he adhered to the party of his royal master with a truth and fidelity which were astonishing when we remember the fine and chivalrous mind of the man, his hatred of cruelty and oppression, his daring nature and yet gentle spirit when unaroused.

To him, the bivouac beneath the bushes' shelter was welcome as the feast in the castle-hall. He was *bon camarado* with all men; every soldier was esteemed his equal when on service, whether his veins bound the rich blood of kings and nobles, or that he was merely the crestless yeoman of the land.

During his career the light-hearted Faulconbridge went and came as he listed, since, unless on the opposing side, no drawbridge was raised, no portcullis lowered, when he rode and required rest or shelter for his party. Nobles welcomed and ladies smiled upon him at the feast, the hall, and tourney. He was the soul of honour—the delight of the brave and fair.

But now he had been engaged hand to hand with the horsemen of the enemy. His giant strength and valour had saved the post where

he fought from being overpowered, and the infantry sacrificed. The ground at his feet was strewn with the bodies of many he had trampled down with his ponderous axe; and as he stood alone upon the spot, after the archers had drawn off, he forgot the scene of blood and the horror of the spectacle around in his admiration of the beauty of the world, as the evening night gradually softened down the surrounding scenery.

When the shadows of night, however, deepened upon the plain, the thoughts of Faulconbridge reverted to the events of the day, and to the fortunes of him he served.

"Would that I could arouse in him," he said, "but a small portion of the spirit of his royal line; would that he owned but a tithe of the disposition of his brother Richard, and all might yet go well. We would beat these Frenchmen hence. As it is, our leaders desert our cause, and we fight here but a losing game. Waren, Contans, Seez, Evereux, and Baieux have fallen from us."

"Aye," uttered a voice close at his elbow, and since that, Sir Guy of Thouars and his

Bretons have taken Mount St. Michael, Avranche, and a dozen fortresses besides ; you but lose your time, Sir Knight, in fighting for one who seems to have deserted himself."

The Bastard started, heaved up his battle-axe, and turned upon the speaker—a tall figure, clad in complete steel, and leading in his hand a youth.

"How now !" he said, "who dares breathe treason and disloyalty against him I serve ! Speak, sirrah, lest I smite thee for thy boldness."

"I speak but what all men know," returned the other, "and that of which you yourself are equally convinced. You but waste your efforts. I say, in this country, in the endeavour to serve one who, if he hath not deserted himself, has deserted his friends."

"How mean ye, Sir Knave ?" again angrily demanded Faulconbridge.

"That the King hath sailed, or is on the eve of sailing, for England," replied the other. "And that those he has left behind may have no doubts, as to his sincerity in abandoning them, he has first demolished Pont de l'Arche,

Foulineaux, and Montfort l'Amauri. His Norman subjects at least can have but small hopes of succour from him, and for his English troops, I advise them to cross the seas with all the speed they can."

"Ha!" exclaimed Faulconbridge, "can this be true?"

"Wherefore should you doubt it," replied the other, "knowing the King so well as you do?"

"And who and what art thou," inquired Faulconbridge, "who thus stumblest upon me in the gloom with such ill-omened tidings?"

"One formerly, and in happier days, a soldier like thyself," said the stranger, "but at present a broken and beggard man."

"And your name?" asked Faulconbridge.

"It is one you have doubtless often heard," said the stranger, "but were I to pronounce perchance your arm would be stretched forth to apprehend me."

"You have said too much and too little for us to part without further circumstance," said Faulconbridge.

"I have sought thee, Plantagenet, with no

purpose so to part," returned the
"Neither do I fear to speak a name which
cast and outlaw as I have become, is yet ~~is~~
in this land. I am Guichard of Poicteau.

"That is indeed a well-known name,"
Faulconbridge, regarding the outlaw with
osity. "Though it is one more celebrated
bold than evil deeds. 'Twas thou who
the Knight of Daundelyonne to escape
an ignominious death."

"It was," returned Guichard.

"And what then hath made thee di
thy name to me?" inquired Faulconbridge
interest.

"Circumstances have made me resolv
quit my former way of life," replied the
law. "I would fain return to England
land of my birth; and I have sought th
crave thy aid and protection."

"Would the bold outlaw of Poicteau tru
any thing save his own right arm?" dema
Faulconbridge.

"'Tis not for myself I ask this fav
answered the outlaw, "'tis for this y
Branded as I am, with a price set upon

d, I would fain commend him to the care
some noble of truth and honour, till he
ch the English shore."

"And where is he then destined?" inquired
ulconbridge, gazing with interest on the
gant form of the stripling.

"He will find friends upon the Kentish
ast," replied Guichard; "where, indeed, as
on as I have taken leave of my former com-
anions, it is my purpose to join him."

"Is he thy son?" inquired the Bastard.

"It is indeed my child," said Guichard,
'whom, until lately, I had thought dead."

"And for his sake you are then quitting
this land to seek a better trade? am I right?"

"Tis even so," said Guichard.

"Enough, I accept the charge; and should
I not myself return to England, I will give
him in charge to the Earl of Salisbury, with
strict injunctions as to his safety and welfare."

Far away in the distance lay the tents of
he English power, glancing in long white rows,
as the moon shed her silver light over the
plain. The overwearied army slept after their

toils, but ere the dawn broke the rolling drum was heard in different quarters of the encampment as the several leaders struck their tents, and with their followers slowly retired. A rumour had reached them that John was collecting a fleet to sail for England.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HERMIT.

1.

His bed was strew'd with rushes,
Which grew upon the shore ;
And o'er his frame emaciate,
A sackcloth shirt he wore.
His eyes he oftimes raised to heaven,
And thus exclaimed he :
 Adieu, adieu, thou faithless world,
 Thou wast not made for me !

2.

He sunk down on his rushes ;
His thread of life was broke ;
His eyes were closed in death's dim shade,
And never word he spoke.
His tongue in falt'ring accents moved,
'Twas life's last agony.
 Adieu, adieu, it seemed to say,
 Thou wast not made for me.

OLD SONG.

WHEN the Minstrel left his new ally, the
jester Gondibert, he pushed on for some miles
at a quick pace ; for he wisely considered, that

in the event of a recapture by the emissaries of John, his chance would be but a meagre one. The nearest tree and a short shrift might be his brief doom. With health, strength, and the courage of a lion, however, his spirits were high, and his step and bearing firm and buoyant as that of the stag upon the hill-side.

One purpose wholly possessed him, the recapture of the lady of his love; the only difficulty was to trace out the route her ravishers had taken. That discovered, and, to one of his ardent temperament, the rest seemed easy. Nevertheless, every step he took might lead him in a direction contrary to the destination he sought. As this conviction forced itself more fully upon him, he at length came to a stand, and, in a state of perplexity, endeavoured to commune with himself as to the best plan to pursue. His own personal safety was the very last thing he was likely to think of, but then he wisely considered that to lose his life or liberty would be the worst possible way of aiding her he professed to serve, and at length he came to the conclusion that travelling in his present character was rather a

dangerous experiment at the present moment. His costume of a troubadour, or minstrel, was perhaps as good a travelling garb as a man could well assume in these wild times, when every man's hand was against his fellow; since the professors of the joyous science were generally held sacred, and their company courted by high and low, gentle and simple. But as he might be recognized by the numerous parties continually repassing at this moment he resolved to doff it the first opportunity, and assume some other disguise.

Horse to ride and weapon to wear would have jumped most with his humour; but as he was now in the open world without a cross in his pocket, they were not at the present moment to be even thought of. Nay, even a good breakfast, under his peculiar circumstances, he began to think, although highly desirable, was somewhat difficult to achieve.

The road he had taken led towards Brittany, and as he had already been passed by more than one of the armed posts which at this distracted period were continually "tiring on," carrying messages, and bearing news to

way or she
country on

The path
dently gave
habited by
down he had
ded with
their broad
found himse
or hermitage

Nothing
wishes than
for some tin
tance witho
length took
and entering
The hermi

oughs of trees, and was thatched with
and dried fern; a wretched shelter even
a dog, and through whose crevices the
and rain found ready entrance.

Such as it was, however, it had been reared
purposes of penance and hard suffering,
st probably by some repentant ruffian, the
nes of whose early life having savoured of
kless madness, his overheated brain had
ed in age upon an opposite extreme of in-
nity, supposing the solitary life of a beast in
fields, with nails, hair, and beard uncut,
ded to seclusion and starvation, would best
me for his sins during life, and procure him
monization as a saint after death.

As the minstrel gazed around the dark
terior of the squalid hermitage, he at first
cluded it was untenanted, but on a closer
vey, a startling object met his gaze.

On a filthy pallet, at its extremity, lay the
ring remains of the proprietor of the holy
lifice, the venerable hermit of this lonely
od. A more revolting spectacle the youth
d never looked upon. The beard of the
duse, which would have been white but for

the dirt with which it was matted, covered his skeleton breast; and amid "fell of hair," his sharp features, and eyes, gave him the appearance of a skeleton. Starvation and sharp misery had reduced to a living anatomy; a filthy and ragged fragment of sackcloth barely covered his body. His nails, which had been permitted for years, were of a frightful length, and together the minstrel was so much horrified by the lonely situation, and the object before him, that he felt at first inclined to fly to some place.

After a while, however, as he perceived the object before him was not yet dead, he prompted him to approach, in order that he could render assistance; and observed a basket which had been doubtless left by a peasant, for the use of the sick hermit, containing wine and other refreshments, and the liberty of putting the flasket to the lips of the prostrate sinner, and poured the contents down his throat.

The hermit rallied with the grateful unwonted taste of the cordial, and

sciousness returned, caused by the generous liquor from which he had for many years abstained, the recollections, thoughts, and feelings of former days returned also.

He raised himself upon his pallet, and fixing his wondering eyes upon the minstrel with some such expression as that with which Caliban regards Trinculo, when he says,—

“Thou art a god, and bear'st celestial liquor.”

Even so the dying hermit regarded the youth who had poured the best part of a flagon of hippocras into his collapsed stomach.

After a long and searching look, during which the film seemed to dissolve from before the old man's dull eyes, and they assumed, in its place, an unnatural lustre, which was doubtless quite as much the result of genuine wine as insanity, he seemed as if he recollected something of the countenance before him, and had half expected the visit.

“Thou hast tarried long, my son,” he said, “and thy coming hath well nigh been too late. Thou hast recalled me from bright visions, and the flowery paths of a celestial world, of which

mine eyes had a distant glimpse, to the dull horrors of this miserable earth, and this noisome hovel."

"You mistake me, holy Father, for some older acquaintance," replied the youth; "but calm yourself, and again taste from the flask which, he whom you take me for, has doubtless left for your support. Drink, holy Father, it will renovate your spirits, and put strength into your feeble heart."

"I mistake thee not, good youth," said the Hermit: thy favour is familiar to me, and I have long expected thy coming. The wish at this moment nearest to thy heart I can both divine and supply."

"Gramercy," said the Minstrel, looking around the bare and wretched hovel, "I something doubt that, holy Father, both as regards your capability of divining my wishes at this moment, and your power to supply them. My desires must indeed be humble, if they are to be satisfied by what I behold around me here."

"Thy thoughts are full of hope and ambition," said the Hermit, "but thou lackst the

st means of following them on to for-

Thou art without purse or prospect;
bright fortune is before thee, hadst thou
means of pursuing it. Thou lackest har-
weapons, and steeds, to set thee up in
world of strife."

Now, by our Lady's grace," returned the
hermit, "how your holiness hath divined
my thoughts, I know not; but thou hast
said them aright."

The walls of this dwelling are bare, my
hermit resumed the Hermit, evidently waxing
as he continued the conversation, "my
goods are few, yet still have they been
sufficient for my wants for many years; a
need to dig roots for food whilst I live, and a
need for my body when dead. The last duty
is for thee to complete. Behold! the
casket stands in yonder nook beside the cru-
cifix. At midnight, dig deep into the centre
of the floor of this hermitage; take thence
that which thou covetest, and lay my body in
ice. So shall both our wants be pro-
vided for."

The Minstrel was considerably surprised at

the words of the dying Hermit. He, however, promised faithfully to perform the last ceremony of his interment, which was all he supposed the holy man was anxious about, for as to finding any of the promised treasures buried in the hermitage, he considered that part of the story but a crochet of the old man's wandering brain. For many hours he continued to attend to the recluse; not forgetting, however, to partake of the viands which filled the basket upon the table; and about midnight the Hermit breathed his last.

The night was dark and stormy, and the situation of the youth by no means an agreeable one. He was alone in the house of death, and a degree of awe and melancholy he had never before experienced, seized upon his mind. As vivid flashes of lightning lit up the interior of the hermitage, and occasionally disclosed the ghastly object upon the couch, he sometimes fancied the skeleton form had risen from its lair, and was hovering close beside him.

Under the influence of these feelings he almost repented of the promise he had given to

the dying man to remain and perform his obsequies, and felt inclined more than once to rush on the dismal refuge into the forest without.

After awhile he somewhat subdued the awe which had crept over him, and rising from his seat approached the prostrate corpse in order to see if life was indeed quite extinct; and as he found no signs of animation, he immediately took the spade and at once commenced his labours. The exhalations darting through the ground gave him plenty of light for his task, and as the soil had evidently been frequently disturbed, he had nothing to do but to throw it

The work, however, took him some little time to perform, and having dug to a sufficient depth for the purposes of burial, he was about to desist in order to deposit the corpse. As he relinquished his spade, a sudden flash of lightning illumined the interior of the hermitage, and he beheld the ghastly form of the Hermit, with his owl-like visage and long grey beard, sitting upright upon the bed, and steadily regarding him. The eyes of this terrible apparition were wild and glaring, and

the finger of his right hand pointed into the newly-made grave.

The Minstrel at first recoiled with horror, and leaping from the trench he had dug, rushed to the further extremity of the hermitage, and sought wildly for the latch of the door.

A few moments' reflection, however, sufficed to convince him that the vision was but a creation of his own brain; more especially as a succeeding flash of lightning again showed him the corpse of the Hermit lying in the same position in which it was when the body had ceased to breathe.

Determined, nevertheless, to obey the signal his imagination had conjured up, he again seized the spade, and commenced digging with renewed vigour; and after shovelling out a few more spadefuls of the dark chalky soil, he came upon so hard a substance that he found it impossible to penetrate deeper. The instrument upon being struck emitted a dull, heavy sound, and he quickly found upon examination that it was a good-sized oaken chest, strongly banded with iron, and so ponderous whilst

that it was not without considerable toil that he at length succeeded in raising it out of the cave, and landing it on the floor of the hermitage. The operation of digging, or rather overhelling into the earth from the pit at which he had been labouring, had employed him so long, that morning was breaking as he finished his task, and he opened the door of the hermitage that he might see more plainly what had been bequeathed to him by the deceased recluse. His curiosity was so much excited that he quite forgot the state of loneliness he had before experienced, and to set to work with good will to get to the interior of the chest. That which first presented itself to the Minstrel appeared to be the impossibility of breaking into so strong a casket; but on examining the iron hoops which lapped over the chest, he found to his great joy they were unstayed.

To open the lid was but the work of a few moments, when, true to the words of the hermit, that which he most wished for immediately saluted his eyesight,—a suit of chain mail, a knight's helmet and spurs, with

sword and shield to match, together with
two bags well filled with "shekels of the
tested gold."

To draw the harness forth, and gaze upon it
with feelings of affection and delight, was the
minstrel's next employment. He then looked
with curiosity upon the shield, in order to see
if by its bearings he could discover the name
or rank of the former owner.

The charges borne upon its surface were,
however, those termed in heraldry "adum-
brated charges," being figures merely repre-
sented in outline, with the colour of the field
showing through: thereby signifying that the
bearer having lost his patrimony, retained in
fact but the show of his former state and dig-
nity.

With feelings of unmixed delight, the youth-
ful minstrel for some time continued to regard
his prize, since he now saw himself in posses-
sion of that which his soul had long coveted,
namely, a fitting equipage wherewith to win
the renown for which he so long had panted.
He resolved, therefore, to assume at once the
arms which it appeared Heaven had guided

to the spot for the very purpose of
leaving.

The next, and most disagreeable part of his
task, was the performance of his promise to
the deceased hermit, but the possession of the
quest of the recluse had put him in such
high spirits that he set about it with alacrity.
Possessing himself of so much of the hoarded
treasure as he conceived would be sufficient for
the purchase of a steed, he placed the body of
the hermit in the chest, along with the remain-
ings, and consigning it to the earth, carefully
filled up the grave, obliterating from the floor
all signs of recent disturbance.

Scarcely had he finished his task, when the
loud sound of horns and the bay of hounds
struck upon his ear. To be discovered by any
of the followers of the Court was hazardous;

hastily arraying his body in the suit of
mail, he concealed the casque and weapons
beneath the straw of the rude couch of the
hermit, and concealing his warlike appear-
ance by throwing over the whole the long
blackish gown of the deceased, he carefully
drawed the cowl over his features. This done,

he grasped the Palmer's staff, and boldly throwing open the door of the hermitage, rushed forth into the forest.

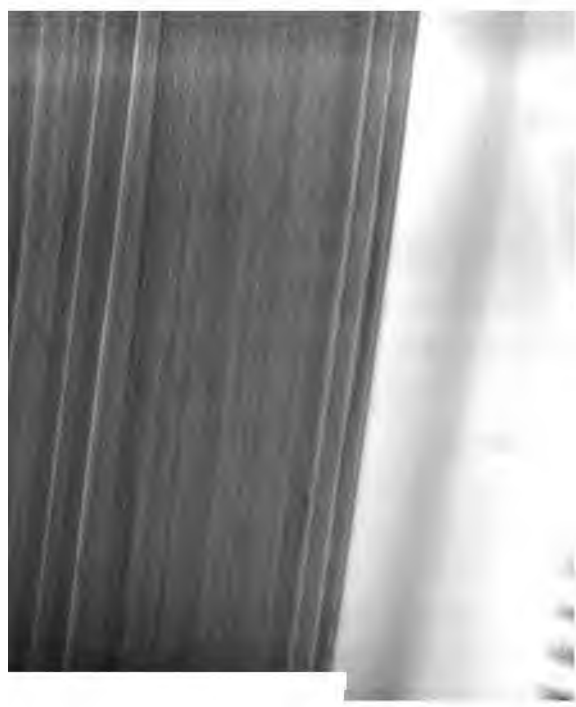
The sport which immediately presented itself was an exciting one. The hunt was up, and the royal train in the field,—the King himself being present. Although it is hardly possible for the keenest sportsman of the present age to form any idea of the excessive fondness of the Anglo-Norman kings and nobles for the diversion of the chase, yet John was truly by fits and starts given to such pastimes. At one moment, wholly possessed by his madness, he would not, for months together, move his horse to join in the hunt; whilst again, at others, as if he sought to drive away thoughts by violent exercise, he would weary out all his attendants in the field. Many of the nobles also, were so fond of hunting and hawking, that they spent most of their time, not engaged in war, in the hunting-field, wasting half their revenues by the expensive manner in which they pursued their favourite diversion*.

* John of Salisbury, who speaks of the chase at this

ound of the horn, and the baying of
were rather too much for the minstrel
without endeavouring to gain a peep
exciting scene. Trusting, therefore, to
rise, he stepped, as we have seen, to
of the hermitage, and beheld the
at sweep by.

who, mounted on his favourite hunter,
give him his due, a most regal-looking
e, being the handsomest as well as the
sed man of his day, with Isabella by
was foremost in the gallant train; and

ations that the nobles of the land esteemed the
ie field as amongst the most honourable employ-
most excellent of virtues, so that they spent
rt of their time in such diversions, thinking
erves, the supreme felicity of life. "Nay," says
prepare for these sports with even more anxiety,
d bustle, than they do for war, and pursue wild
greater fury than they do their enemies." By
uit, he goes on to affirm, they lose not alone
nity, but become greater monsters than the
y hunt. So general was the rage for rural sports
middle ages, that ladies and clergy were alike
it. "If one of these merciless hunters pass
ion," again observes John of Salisbury, "pro-
refreshment you have, or can buy or borrow.
involved in ruin as a churlish host, or be even
reason."



thought it prudent to retire and close the door ; but trusting to his disguise, he bade them enter.

"The peace of heaven be upon you, holy father," said the latter of the two strangers, "we are sinful wanderers, who would fain find rest for a brief space, and if possible, refreshment."

"The hut of the hermit is but a poor house of entertainment for man or beast," returned the Minstrel ; "except water, which ripples from the rocks, and roots dug from the earth, nothing have I to set before you. Unless you can browse upon the herbage, with your steeds, good seigneurs, you will get, I fear, but a spare breakfast here."

"Gramercy, for your courtesy," said the stranger ; "'twould have been better in that case to have wended onwards. Nevertheless, holy father, we will be bounden to you for at least the shelter of your roof for a brief space."

So saying, the two knights, for such they seemed to be, slackened the girths of their steeds, that they might pick a salad whilst they rested ; and re-entering the hermit-

age, seated themselves upon the truckle-bed, like men who had ridden many miles since they first crossed their steel saddles.

At first the youth conceived that the visit of the stranger cavalier and his companion boded him no good. They were most probably, he thought, of the royal party ; and perhaps his safest plan would be to take an opportunity of quietly leaving the hermitage, and, whilst they were engaged in conversation, secure his escape by making free with one of their steeds, without the ceremony of leave-taking.

As he deliberated upon the propriety of this measure, the conversation of the pair, which he could hardly avoid overhearing, considerably interested him. They evidently had made the vicinity of the hermitage a trysting-place on some matter of import, and expected the coming of other parties. But that which chiefly caused the minstrel to lend his attention to all that passed, was the circumstance of their alluding, during their discourse, to the abduction of some lady of rank ; who, the minstrel immediately concluded, could be no other than her

he himself was so desirous of tracing. Whilst he listened with an attentive ear to the whispered discourse of his two guests, the distant sound of horns, and the echo of the wild halloo of the sportsmen proclaimed that the hunt was once more up, and in the vicinity of the hermitage.

The strangers immediately arose and looked north. As they did so, the throng of hunters appeared in a distant glade of the forest; and the stag, now wearied and out-breathed, his former swift pace reduced to a reeling trot, and every step accompanied by a deep sob, suddenly emerging from the thick foliage, made straight for the hermitage, as if to gain its shelter.

On seeing the figures before the entrance, the gored beast made a sudden stop, then turned, and throwing up his antlered head, attempted to bound off and escape into the covert. The effort, however, was too much for his failing strength, and after a few paces had been gained, the gallant animal plunged heavily forward, and without another struggle breathed its last.

The next moment the foremost of the hunters (whose train had been considerably diminished by the length of the chase) came thundering up. One man, and it was the Plantagenet himself, was in advance of the rest. He galloped to the spot on which the stag had fallen, and dismounting from his steed, gazed upon it with curiosity. The animal was indeed worthy of his notice, for it was of an immense size.

"Ha! my masters all," he said, as he placed his foot upon the fat carcase, whilst the remainder of the train coming up, stood around with their caps doffed, "Ha! my master's all: but this is a rare beast, and well worthy of the toil we have this day endured in his chase. What say ye, my Lord Abbot?" he continued to the hunter next him. "By my fay, 'tis a religious beast too, and hath sought to die here in the sanctity of this hermit's cell."

The churchman bit his lip, for he well knew that John seldom spared a jest against the clergy. "Your Highness is pleased to be jocular," he said; "nevertheless, methinks the remark savours strongly of impiety."

"Nay," said the King, laughing, "we meant no offence against holy mother Church, Sir priest*. And yet look ye," he continued, as he struck the enormous carcase of the stag with his foot, "how fat and well fed is this animal! Nay, there is scarce a monk in thy abbey in better case, and yet I dare be sworn he never said a single mass."

The churchman turned away amidst the laughter this sally had occasioned; and whilst John busied himself in a closer examination of the fallen deer, he regarded him with a look of deadly hate.

Followed by an attendant monk, the abbot stepped into the hermitage.

"I marvel the wrath of Heaven hath not manifested itself against yonder scoffer," he said to his companion.

"If the service of so weak a minister might be accepted," said the attendant monk, "I would dedicate myself to the destruction of the tyrant."

* John's sallies, of so-called wit against the corpulency of the monks, more than all his enormous crimes, made him known with them for an atheist.

"Ha!" cried the churchman, "'twere indeed a worthy piece of duty, good Eustatius. We will confer further at a more fitting opportunity."

Meanwhile, the King gave orders for a repast to be prepared beneath the sheltering boughs of the surrounding trees, whilst the bugles of the huntsmen rang out to recall the stragglers, and inform the Queen of their whereabouts. He then entered the hut, and, together with Mauluc, held conference with the strangers, who, it soon appeared, had appointed to meet the monarch at this spot. What was the exact purport of their meeting the minstrel failed of discovering; but, unsuspected under his assumed character, he learned enough to give him a shrewd suspicion that their appointment with the King had some connexion with the abduction of Bertha Daundelyonne. They spoke of some deep-laid scheme to carry off a lady of rank. Sir Raoul de Brabant's name more than once transpired, and Brittany seemed to be the theatre of their exploits. Under these cir-

tances, the minstrel resolved to keep a
eye upon the pair, and follow them as
as they should part company with the
rch.

CHAPTER V.

AN ABDUCTION.

WE'LL show thee so, as she was a maid,
And how she was beguiled.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE rapidity with which the small party travelled with Bertha Daundelyonne, gave the lady little time for thought or observation.

In those days, roads were rough and were foul. The country was for the most part swamp, wold, waste, or forest; and a long excursion required all the care and attention of the rider towards the steed he rode, lest he should fail in keeping his footing on the uneven track. The night, too, had become somewhat overcast after the party started, and, as the lady had no cause to complain of want of attention on the part of the knight who rode at her bridle-rein, and assisted in the guidance of her horse, at the same time that he appeared to be the commander of

-she felt somewhat surprised, that although they had been galloping helter skelter for several hours, he had addressed no word of attention to her, merely replying to any question she might make, by a simple monosyllabic reply.

John however concluded, that fear of the presence of the dreaded John, in case they should be pursued and overtaken, kept her servant so wholly occupied in mind, till they were somewhat beyond the reach of pursuit, he was too absorbed and preoccupied to be able to converse even with

as so much the custom for ladies of the time at this period to be for hours at a time on horseback, both when engaged in the chase and the diversions of the field, that for some time found the rapid rate at which they rode no fatigue to her. As morning however, began to dawn upon them whilst still at their headlong speed, she requested of John that the quick pace at which they were travelling might be somewhat moderated, as she began to feel fatigued.

"Methinks, Sir Minstrel," she said, "that at the pace we have ridden, we must be now pretty secure from pursuit, and Chateau Trompillon, where my father is quartered, cannot be many miles distant."


Her attendant turned a deaf ear to the hint, and pointing to the dark boundary of a thick forest which lay about a mile ahead, whose dusky outline was now becoming visible in the mists of the rising dawn, he signified that until the covert of the wood was gained they must hold onwards with all the speed they could make.

"Our party is small, Lady," he remarked, and the King will be likely to send a strong body of his fleetest horse after us; in which case, should we be overtaken, we must expect no sort of favour, for well I know his vengeful nature. Trust me, Lady, we shall be ridden down and slaughtered without remorse or mercy."

So far as himself and his followers were concerned, the speaker had but urged the truth, inasmuch as his troop being entirely composed of the troops of the Knight Sir Rascal, would stand a good chance of being

stopped or molested by any larger party than themselves; for the Brabançons were at the period little better than commissioned banditti, ever ready to engage under the banner that paid them best, infamous at all times for rapine, and whose hands were against all men. Almost ere the forest was gained, and as the increasing light made objects more distinguishable, rendering the individuals of the troop, in the midst of which the lady rode, more plainly to be observed, a horrid suspicion entered her mind that all was not quite right. The next minute, however, the party dashed into the jaws of the thick wood, which, dark as a wolf's mouth, at length caused them to moderate their pace.

The Lady now addressed some words of inquiry to her companion, but, under pretence of looking to the proper route of his party, he evaded her question and reined back so as to allow her to precede him his steed's length. It was now again dark as midnight, and except the hoof-tread of their steeds, and the ringing sound of arms and steel harness, occasionally varied by the cry of some startled



check her steed,
But as the iron f
diately closed up
to her dismay, t
verified, and the
Her terror now h
scarcely sit her
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might yet prove
to banish her ala

After about a
as the forest bec
the party called
searching for sor
pected to meet w
came to a sort of

As the mists of early dawn, they suddenly appeared before a low, irregular, moated building, lying in the midst of a beautiful space, as the emerald. The party rode round the dark moat until they came to the draw-bridge at the entrance, when the leader putting a tongue to his lips blew a loud blast. No stir was for some time apparent within the stronghold. The thick low towers which flanked the gate-house had no windows, but to those who watched the small narrow crenelles and arrow-slits grim features and flashing eyes seemed to be seen glaring upon them from within. At length, after a somewhat tedious scrutiny during which the party kept at a respectful distance from the gate-house, a voice, which issued from a round opening in the basement of one of the towers, demanded their business. The answer was given by the leader in a language the Lady Bertha did not understand, after which the leader was desired to move forward. As he did so, he took his hands from the hands of the man who carried him, and spurring towards the gate-house shook the iron door as to display upon its dark surface

the dragon volant; the countersign was demanded of them, when a small packet delivered through the opening.

The towers were immediately garrisoned by men-at-arms, who sprang up from behind the turrets. The drawbridge was lowered, the portcullis raised, and the massive door thrown open; upon which the party, receiving the word "forwards," trotted into a small court, and the entrance was again immediately fast closed against the world. The lady found herself in a square paved court, which seemed half filled with the troops which garrisoned the place, and who had been mustered on the approach of her party. A glance around showed her the insecurity of the times, since one side of the square was blackened by the shell, a significant intimation of recent siege, fire, and slaughter had been in its present occupiers in possession of the place. As she gazed in terror and amazement, the leader of the party dismounted, and with much courtesy assisted her from her horse. Somewhat re-assured by the attention of her conductor, she inquired if the

they had arrived at, was that in which she had been led to expect she was to meet the Knight, her father.

"This, Lady," said her guide evasively, "is the place to which I am commissioned to escort you. Permit me to wait on you into the hall of the building." So saying, her conductor took her hand and led her into the mall arched hall of the stronghold.

We have said that the leader of the escort, under the disguise of his closed helm and steel harness, in height and figure was not unlike the youthful minstrel; but when, on leading the lady to the blazing fire which glowed upon the hearth, he raised his visor, she discovered—that which she dreaded was the case—that her escort was a perfect stranger to her. The dreadful truth instantly became apparent; she had been betrayed and entrapped. By the dragon volant, which was emblazoned upon the surcoats of several of the men-at-arms, who closed around to gaze upon her, she knew the Breton troopers, the mercenaries employed by John. The gloomy apartment, the grim and savage figures amongst whom she found

herself alone, and a sense of the incomprehensible conduct of the minstrel, who appeared to have betrayed her, struck a chill upon her heart, and gazing wildly at the leader of the escort and his companions, she sank down in a swoon upon the floor.

The young esquire, who was a degree better than the troops amongst whom he served, was moved with the situation of his charge. He saw in an instant that one so exquisitely beautiful ought not to be exposed in her distress to the rude gaze of the hirelings and coarse ruffians around: as she reclined in his arms she looked some angel who had descended into that dark hall for a season. Addressing himself, therefore, to one of the men-at-arms, who stood gazing like a savage suddenly beholding beauty for the first time, he bade him sound to horse.

"Sound out, Bernak, and get the men under arms," he said; "I have orders for you, my masters all," he continued, "from our chief, and you must get to horse without delay."

The men slowly and reluctantly withdrew their gaze, and with clanking strides left the

apartment, all save one, who appeared a sort of officer of the garrison, and to him the esquire applied for assistance in order to restore his fair charge to consciousness. An elderly female was quickly summoned, and Bertha, being conveyed to a sleeping apartment of the building, was consigned to her care.

"The damsel of Brittany," said the soldier, enquiringly, as with the esquire, he re-entered the hall, "by heaven, she is as lovely as report speaks her! but you are rather sooner than we expected. The bird hath been limed easily, methinks. I hardly thought that John could have got her so quickly into his power."

"You are mistaken, good Bernak," returned the Esquire. "This lady is not the damsel of Brittany. That business hath not yet been effected; but our leader is even now engaged to it. Meanwhile, this is a little *affaire de cour* of our own. The good knight is resolved to win his wife, and yonder lady hath lands in England, as broad as her beauty is exceeding."

"Ah!" said the other, "and is it so? Then presume he gets the royal consent in this

matter as fee for his service in carrying off the royal Breton?"

"I know not that, good Bernak," said the Esquire, "but he means, at all events, to thrive in his suit, and gain the lady's consent first. Accordingly, he hath commenced his wooing like a soldier; and we have carried her off, as you perceive."

"And when are we to expect the good Knight, with his other prisoner?" asked Bernak. "We have now rendezvoused here a whole month, lying close as a nest of hornets in a frost. By the same token, we are somewhat tired of the dulness of such seclusion, whilst the whole land rings with drum and trumpet. Methought, you dropped some hint of a move hence, just now?"

"I did so," returned the Esquire, "we shall all have opportunity of enjoying the fresh air in a short space. John requires the services of his friends just now; and ere to-morrow dawn, you march for Falaise."

"Good!" said Bernak; "and you, I suppose, remain in charge here. Ah! Sir Knave; said I well? By the mass, an' I had thy simper and

ars, and well-turned limbs, I should like no
tter duty. Such a prize as yonder beauty,
ethinks, would go well nigh to make me com-
t a breach of trust. Do you remain perdue,
re, good Aumori, or carry the fair Linda-
des towards our Brabançon home?"

"See you there, now!" said the Esquire.
What a clever fellow you think me. Suffice
our roads run in different directions; and
re goes the trumpet that summons thee to
re. Adieu!"

When Bertha Daundelyonne recovered from
r swoon, she found herself alone with the
ghtful specimen of the fair sex to whose
rge she had been consigned; and as con-
ousness of her situation flashed upon her
nd, she threw herself upon her knees before
ill-favoured hag, and in accents of terror
leavoured to elicit from her the name of the
ties into whose power she had fallen. It
s all in vain. The old dame, whose envious
position seemed as crooked as her shape,
dently enjoyed the distress of a creature as
uisitely beautiful as she herself was hideous.
those persons consigned to her charge, she

all things ; and meanwhile, a lady would have every index with the orders received, and gave her to understand that it was useless to attempt leaving the tenanted. With this, she drew, and left her charge to

When the massive door swung open, a sickening sensation came over Bertha as she heard the heavy ponderous lock which made the unknown chamber. On entering herself, she took the lamp from the table, and gazed around.

The apartment was ample and comfortable, like other rooms of that period, but it had a cold inhospitable

ivy, hearse-like bed, however, stood in
er, and on the hearth glowed a comfort-
d fire; whilst a cumbrous oaken table,
gs were as thick as a man's body, stood
s blaze, and a couple of heavy chairs
positions on either side the fire-place.
were times in which the most diabo-
unscrupulous deeds were perpetrated
fenceless females; many ladies of noble
ving been forcibly and secretly ab-
rom their friends, and never again
f. And well did the lady at this
remember such tales. Yet still, unless
ish king, whose well-known propensity
insult to the wives and daughters of
s, had caused her to be thus carried
was utterly at a loss to fix on any per-
knew as likely to have made her a pri-
this infamous manner. The recogni-
the banner of one of the mercenary
s in the employ of John, but whose
the present moment she could not re-
made her suspect the English monarch,
f all men she most dreaded him, she
portionally alarmed.

CHAP

THE

About a stone-cast
A sluice with bl
And o'er it, many
The clustered m
Hard by, a poplar
All silver-green
For leagues no
The level waste, t

She only said "M
He cometh not,
She said, "I am a
I would that I

HOWEVER much th
the development of t
tion, fearing as she
realize her worst sur
a visit from the hate
that something like
her captor, would be
ever, that she was to

activity without ever being informed of the reasons of such persecution, or the person by whom she was condemned to it.

Day after day passed, and her solitude was not relieved by the sight of any living being except the miserable-looking attendant to whom she had been first consigned.

The old dame seemed to have been especially ordered to anticipate her wishes in regard to the good things of this life, and took great care that as to the articles of food she should have no cause of complaint. The hag, however, signified, that her directions now extended to the indulgence of so much liberty as an old man's stroll in the thick-walled garden of the manor twice a day amounted to, on which occasion the old dame hinted that she herself would always be within hail.

Even this was a great boon to the fair maid of Kent, and served to break the hitherto sadful monotony of her solitary confinement. It also gave her hopes of some time or other effecting her escape; and she examined, with careful eye, every part of the pleasure garden and over again, as she daily profited by

the liberty thus allowed. Her hopes, however, seemed destined to be dashed. The only outward opening in the high and massive wall, which on every side surrounded the garden, was protected by a thick iron-studded door, strong enough for a jail; and when on one occasion her jailer observed the wistful eye with which she examined it, she took one of the keys from her girdle, and turning the ponderous lock, threw it open. Bertha then saw that the dark waters of the moat flowed outside, the only means of crossing which was by a small draw-bridge, locked and secured on the garden side. Any escape through the interior of the fortress from this garden was, she likewise found, equally hopeless; as, except by the small and narrow postern by which she had entered it, there was but one other entrance, and that apparently had been closed for years.

The garden, too, exhibited tokens of having been utterly neglected for a great length of time. Its damp walks were overgrown with weeds and moss. The unpruned boughs of the trees grew in such wild luxuriance, that it

was a task of some difficulty for their explorer to pick her way along them. Weeds and long grass completely overwhelmed the few flowers here and there struggling amidst them, whilst

“ The rusted nails fell from the knots
That held the peach to the garden wall.”

There was, however, a melancholy in all this neglect and ruin, which better suited with the air captive's frame of mind than the most trim and well-kept parterre could have done. She had full leisure in its secluded and shadowy paths to contemplate the unstable nature of all worldly pomp and grandeur—to reflect upon the acts of the envious court in which she had once so much panted to display her beauty, and the real value of that beauty she had held so inestimable, and which had brought her into her present strait.

Here, too, she occupied herself in nourishing the secret passion she entertained for the handsome stripling who had so long attended her, and whom, as we have seen, she confounded with her new acquaintance the young troubadour.

Hour after hour, as the evening wind sighed amongst the thick and clustered trees in this deserted garden, she loved to ponder over the last few months of her existence, especially dwelling upon that part of it which had been spent in the company of the fascinating page. And then again came doubts and fears as to his truth and loyalty to her. There was something terribly humiliating in the idea that he whom she had condescended to regard with favour, and to whom she had almost confessed a requital of his passion, should have betrayed the trust confided to him. Yet that such was the case she could hardly doubt, when she remembered the incomprehensible and singular behaviour of the wayward page from her first becoming acquainted with him; his almost studied indifference to the many tokens of favour with which she had honoured him, and then his sudden profession of attachment on the evening of her flight,—professions which would now seem to have been merely assumed in order that she might place herself in the power of the party he had sent almost immediately after quitting her.

Yet still, with all her doubts and fears, she could hardly believe the boy so base as to have lost all sense of proper feeling; and such was the impression her last interview with the minstrel had left upon her imagination, that she found it impossible to tear his image from her too impressible fancy. Nay, as is oft-times the case with those whom the blind god has winged, and who have little to employ the mind, her whole soul was wrapped in contemplation of the one beloved, and she spent entire days in listening for the slightest stir amongst the garrison of the fortress in which he was confined, in hopes each hoof-tread without and each footstep within might prove that of her favourite.

Providence, however, attunes the mind to the circumstances in which we are placed. Isolda, the once-admired of the glittering throng,—she whose ideas had soared eagle-like above the clouds—now in this cloistered seclusion, like one dead to the world, found her flights of fancy cribbed and confined to the dull routine of a hopeless imprisonment; and her affections were even glad to fasten

themselves upon the poor flowerets of an unweeded garden. She even found employment in training the fruit-trees, which from neglect bent from the walls, and weeding away the rank herbs which encroached over the path. Thus day after day elapsed, till weeks accumulated into months, and yet no change came to disturb the dreadful monotony of her solitary imprisonment:—

- Upon the middle of the night,
Waking, she heard the night fowl crow;
The cock sang out an hour ere light:
From the dark fen the oxen's low
Came to her, without hope of change;
In sleep she seemed to walk forlorn,
Till cold winds woke the grey-eyed morn
About the lonely moated grange."

It had, however, been no part of the plan of the gallant Brabançon to subject the lady he had chosen for his future spouse to so long and rigorous an imprisonment;—but we must explain to our readers, in order to exonerate him from the charge of wilfully neglecting so fair and excellent a lady after having succeeded in getting her into his clutches, that circumstances had totally put it out of his

wer to visit her. It was lucky for the fair
ptive that, after he had succeeded in the
mission entrusted to him, the suspicious
dousy of the King demanded the constant
tendance of the Brabançon at court. It had
en the previous intent of the shrewd Knight,
ho we have already seen was an unscrupu-
us and crafty knave, to take advantage of
e defenceless condition of Bertha, and after
enforced marriage, claim the royal consent
nd pardon in return for the service he hoped
render. What that service was, has already
en intimated to the reader; and the murder
the Duke of Brittany having paved the
ay for its completion, the Brabançon, who
om circumstances was the most likely man to
perform it, eventually succeeded in his attempt,
nd placed Elinor, the sister of the murdered
ake—who by his death became the heiress of
e duchy of Brittany—in her unnatural uncle's
ower, whence, we need scarce inform our
aders, she never again escaped; being, con-
ormably to the barbarity of an age which
ore no rival near the throne, closely immured
the monastery at Bristol for forty years.

This piece of villany had, however, taken the Knight more time and trouble than he had bargained for; and although his emissaries had been for some time at work, and parties of his rapacious troops had been lying perdué in various localities, in the hope of capturing the fair Breton, he was once or twice baffled before he could get her into his power. He had even found it necessary to draw off the party who garrisoned the small fortress he had considered the most eligible spot for his purpose, until he could find leisure to commence a thriving suit, and woo her as he conceived a soldier should woo his bride.

Under these circumstances, and whilst his jealousy would allow of no one, not even the esquire he had first sent as her escort, having access to the lady of his choice, she languished out her dull hours, with only a small guard of some twenty men-at-arms to garrison the stronghold in which she was confined.

The King meanwhile, whose temper and disposition were not improving under the various reverses he daily experienced, got a hint of the matter from Mauluc, whose envious

jealousy had surmised that his sometime companion knew of the whereabouts of the Kentish beauty. Accordingly, the mercenary leader found himself in a sort of safe custody about the Court; inasmuch as he was desired to remain in close attendance, and all his motions were as strictly watched as if he had been an enemy, in place of a well-paid ally.

In fact, the gallant Brabançon found himself altogether in a most unenviable situation after he had rendered John the last piece of service we have named, and placed the unhappy and beautiful heiress of Brittany a hopeless captive in his hands. The King, who had offered him the sum of money agreed on as the fee for this achievement, had been surprised at the mercenary's refusal of all reward. It was this unwonted self-denial of Sir Raoul which had first raised the suspicions of the dark-browed Mauluc, and led him to hint to the monarch that ere long, at some convenient opportunity, the richer reward the Brabançon meant to claim would be broached.

Under these circumstances, the crafty John overwhelmed the Knight with his professions

of attentiveness and gratitude for service already rendered a sure sign that, like the cat when it is most playful with its victim, he meant to destroy the Knight as soon as he was tired of amusing himself at his expense.

In addition to the disgust he felt at such a man as the mercenary leader presuming to interfere with the royal amusements, there was another matter which placed the Brabantine within range of the King's ire. The monarch was absolutely jealous of him, and provoked even by the winning arts of Manue, actually suspected the lovely Isabella of entertaining an affection for the burly Knight.

In explanation of this somewhat extraordinary story upon the part of the royal husband, which led to events of an almost incredible nature, we must remind our readers that nothing could well be considered extraordinary with such a man as John—a fortiori part of whose eccentric acts and dreadful deeds committed in our own days by a common man, would have consigned him to the stocks, a dark room, and a strait-waistcoat for

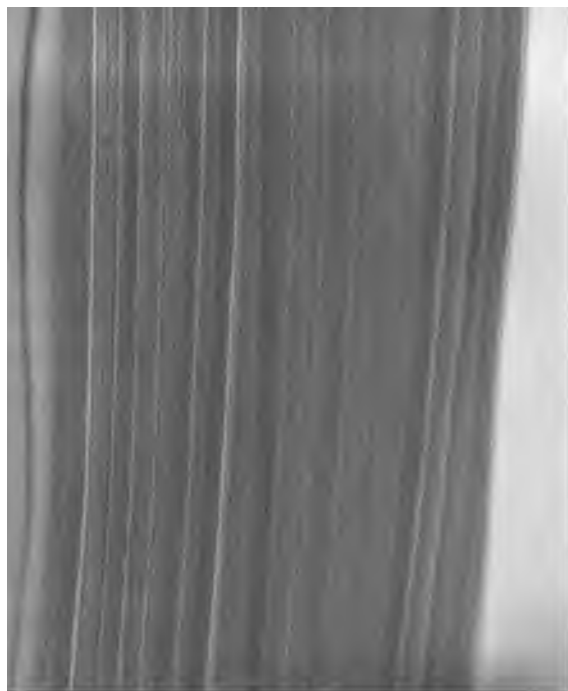
There were, in truth, some slight grounds on which the crafty Mauluc, Iago-like, ought to fasten the suspicions of the King, and afterwards leave them to work "like the mine of sulphur," in his excited brain.

The Brabançon, who half suspected the restrained kindness of the monarch, whilst neither dared to withdraw himself for the purpose of visiting his captive, nor even to send a message to her by any of his followers, certain was he that his every motion was watched, had thought it best to try and interest the Queen as much as possible in his tour. Throwing himself, therefore, upon her feeling, he had sounded a tale in her ear of certain love passages and a devoted attachment he feigned to exist between Bertrando and himself, at the same time taking upon himself the merit of removing the Kentish beauty from the Court and influence of Isabella, who he scrupled not to own had affronted the lady by his attention. Isabella, who had listened with a ready ear to the story and application of the Knight, promised him that at a fitting

and influence with the King, who, indeed, seldom undertook anything without first consulting him.

Between the Brabançon and the Poiteven knight, however, there was but a hollow sort of friendship. In fact, while there was every show of good feeling outwardly, each had resolved the other's ruin at a fitting opportunity. This the Monarch could not fail of observing, and it gave him actually a new pleasure to watch the growing hatred of the pair and their attempts at a sort of overstrained ceremony towards each other; whilst, at the same time, this is the incomprehensible blindness of the ever cunning, he could not see through the deep villany of the one, as he practised upon his own jealousy at the expense of the other.

Whilst concealed in the apartments of the Queen, the Poiteven had overheard the suit of the Brabançon in regard to Bertha, and her Majesty's promise to befriend him, and, ere the interview was over, he sought out and connected the Monarch by a winding-stair to the turret which adjoined the royal apartment,



CHAPTER VII.

A ROYAL EXCURSION.

For while this fool
Plies Desdemona to repair his fortunes,
And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor,
I'll pour this pestilence into his ear:
And, by how much she strives to do him good,
She shall undo her credit with the Moor.
So shall I turn his virtue into pitch,
And out of his own goodness make the net
That shall enmesh them all.

SHAKESPERE.

It is somewhat extraordinary, but not the less true, that bad as was the temper and disposition of John before his marriage with the fair Isabella, he was observed to grow worse after he had been a short time wedded to her. There is no reason to suppose that the Queen ever gave him any real cause to suspect her fidelity, but it is certain that about the period of his reign at which we have now arrived, he was tormented by the green-eyed monster to

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ained as to the truth of her accuser by her performance of the promise she had given to the Brabançon in seeking to introduce his name, and endeavouring to gain a hearing in favour of the boon she intended to ask for him.

Had John patiently listened to the suit she wished to introduce, there is no doubt that the major part of his suspicions would have been dispelled; but unluckily for the gallant Sir Raoul, the mere introduction of his name was sufficient to drive the monarch from her presence; and as Isabella shrewdly suspected her husband's irritability was consequent upon the Knight's presumption in carrying off Bertha and placing her in some place beyond his reach, she had rather a malicious pleasure in occasionally bringing, and somewhat abruptly introducing the knight's name in conversation. At length, she could not fail of perceiving, that any further attempt to touch upon the subject might prove dangerous even to herself; and in a subsequent interview she held with the Brabançon, she advised him quietly to withdraw, and whilst the Court were in waiting for the fleet in which they were to

SIR ROBERT
certainty
advocate,

He then
to the Queen
from her
setting out
which he had

This last
who failed
it. He had
as to put
of the King
from the King
purposes, but
bolical vengeance
take, and by
the Court of

promised him a double gratification; and as any pursuit, however frivolous, would take him from the most important matters, he resolved himself to engage personally in the adventure.

The zest with which the King entered into that, in the present time, would be called a *vue* of this sort, and which promised him not only amusement but revenge, will scarcely be credited by those of our readers who are unacquainted with some of the extraordinary incidents of his reign; and by many perhaps he may be accused of somewhat overdrawing his character.

It must be remembered that John, in his reckless pleasures, entirely forgot what was due to his exalted station, and not unfrequently assumed the meanest disguises as well as allowed the most dangerous and lawless pursuits, for the gratification of the hour. Nay, at a subsequent period of his reign, and during the time he was in seclusion in the Isle of Wight, he was even known to associate with the rude hordes of outlaws and pirates haunting that island, even accompanying them in their expeditions, and amusing himself with the

of bloodshed and plunder they enacted against his own subjects.

In regard to the present adventure. It was first arranged between the King and his old counsellor Mauluc that they should assume the appearance and dress of two of the Bretonnais followers, and equipped in the livery of the dragon volant, ride with him in his troop.

In order to arrange this matter speedily, Le Bossu was put upon duty, and a couple of the mercenaries having been suddenly and secretly arrested and thrown into prison, their arms and weapons which the dragon volant was armed with were immediately brought to the King who together with Mauluc, as speedily assumed the disguise.

St. Barthelemy had resolved to leave the Court soon after midnight; and as the system of espionage was carefully organized in John's court, this was soon known to the King.

To manage matters so that himself and his royal master might mingle unsuspected amongst the troop about to accompany the Knight, was for Mauluc comparatively an easy matter; and

strong body of the Royal Guard having been ordered to follow if possible, without being discovered; the Knight with his party, quite unconscious of the attendance of royalty in his expedition, quietly stole away, and without ceremony or sound of trumpet set forth.

The excitement and delight of the King were so great during this midnight excursion, that his companion feared, notwithstanding his disguise, and the closed visor of the heavy helmet he wore, that his frequent bursts of laughter, which he was occasionally obliged to turn back his horse to indulge, would betray them. As however they rode somewhat apart from the cavalcade, and had managed to form the rearguard, there was less chance of discovery.

For some miles they travelled at a tolerably easy pace, for as the Brabançon well knew that a long journey was before him, he wisely took care not to blow the horses of his party by over-speed at first, but after about a couple of leagues had been gained, they pushed on at a faster pace.

In this order, they rode for many hours of

the night without drawing bridle ; and as the first faint streaks of dawn began to appear, they turned from the road they had before traversed and entered a thick forest.

As the party turned into the dark sandy lane, which led into the woods, and which was so thickly overshadowed by the encroaching foliage, that the men-at-arms were obliged to stoop their heads, as they filed into it, Maniac drew bridle till the whole party were fairly encompassed amongst the trees. He then rose in his stirrups, and darting his lance deep into the sand of the road, left it, with its fluttering bannerole, as a direction for their followers to take the same turn.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PROPOSAL.

Away! I do condemn mine ears, that have
So long attended thee.

Thou solicit'st here a lady, that disdains
Thee and the devil alike.

SHAKESPERE.

URING the long captivity to which Ber-Daundelyonne seemed hopelessly confined, she thought she could perceive the chance of the old crone who tended her, to what relax, and by degrees she found that a liberty was allowed her. At times, before, when her jailer departed, after visiting in the morning, she observed that her door left unfastened, so that the corridor which from her chamber, along one entire wing of building, was at her service, as a place of escape, although the carefully barred doors at extremity totally precluded all chance of

escape. Still this, together with the liberty she enjoyed of visiting the pleasure-grounds of the chateau, was a great indulgence ; and she spent many hours during the day in looking from the grated windows of the gallery into the gloomy court-yard below. There was, in truth, but little to vary the tedium of her solitude, even in this choice of amusements ; as except the occasional arrival and departure of a messenger or man-at-arms, and now and then the admittance of some wayfarer, mendicant, pilgrim, or wandering minstrel, there was nothing to break the monotony of the heavy time.

The hope, however, which “ springs eternal in the human breast,” led her to expect in each stranger she beheld, some champion ready to deliver her from captivity ; and then again the sickness of the heart consequent upon continued disappointment, as day after day passed without change, began to prey upon her spirits, and affect her health. Like Mariana, in somewhat similar circumstances, her deserted state made her occasionally long for the death which

med was to be the only change she was
ned to experience.

ll day within the dreary house,
The doors upon their hinges creaked.
The blue-fly sung i'the pane; the mouse
Behind the mouldering wainscot shriek'd,
: from the crevice peer'd about.
Old faces glimmer'd through the doors,
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
range voices called her from without:
She only said "My life is dreary;
e cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
would that I were dead*."

seemed to the fair captive that the garri-
f the chateau had been considerably dimi-
d since she had been its tenant. Even in
ort time she had been allowed the oppor-
7 of occasionally remarking from the win-
what was going on in the court-yard below,
ad noticed that one or two small detach-
s had left, and had not, to her knowledge,
ned. The number of men-at-arms was
luced, that in place of the lounging figures
heretofore had idled about the dark
icholy square, seeking to pass away the
in occasional athletic games, or sitting in

* Tennyson.

the cool shade of the buildings, employed in sitting and drinking. there were now merely to be seen the sentinels at their posts, or an occasional passer through the court-yard. Still, in her endeavours at discovering the name of the owner of the place, or interesting her female attendant in her cause, either by bribes or entreaties, were unavailing ; and to the hot months of July and August succeeded the refreshing air of the approaching Autumn—and still no change came.

The "trials of adversity," however, according to the great poet of all time, "are sweet," and if there was little of variety in the cloistered life, Bertha had been so long leading, a considerable change for the better was wrought in her disposition. The indomitable spirit and overweening pride of the captive were considerably subdued by the discipline she had undergone. Her ultimate fate she felt was doubtful, and what she was eventually reserved for, or might suffer, thus placed in seclusion amidst the lawless beings in whose power she was, she dreaded to contemplate. At length, a change seemed about to take place

her hitherto monotonous captivity. One morning the wonted dullness of the fortress was broken by sounds betokening the arrival either of the master of the establishment or of some party of importance.

The faint blast of trumpets from without was answered by a lively flourish from the towers of the gate-house within. The ponderous gates were swung open, the portcullis raised, and the heavy tramp of horsemen sounding across the drawbridge, was followed by the clatter of a body of cavalry within the courtyard. The lady gazed upon the unwonted sight with a palpitating heart, and after regarding the iron-clad figures as they dismounted from their steeds, and observing the leader gaze intently up at the window before which she had taken her position, she withdrew and sought her apartment.

The crisis of her fate she felt had arrived, and she prepared to meet it as she best might. She was not long kept in suspense : but a few minutes passed after the arrival of the party, when a heavy footstep was heard in the corridor, and in the tall completely-armed figure, who

entered and raised the visor of his helm, she recognised the mercenary leader, Sir Raoul de Brabant.

There was an assumption of reckless boldness in his manner which seemed to have been called into play in order to hide the dishonourable conduct of which he was conscious of having been guilty towards one so fair and unprotected.

The lady rose as he entered, and as if she comprehended, the moment she beheld him that to him she owed her abduction and captivity, she regarded him with a stern and steady gaze, which made him regret that he had not the protection of his closed visor to hide his abashed countenance.

The royal blood of the Saxon showed conspicuous in the look with which—and without uttering a syllable—she regarded her captor. Not a sentence passed between the pair for some moments, and the Brabançon, notwithstanding the natural insolence of his disposition, felt that he would have given something considerable if his prisoner would only begin the conversation in which, it struck him, he him-

lf was about to play but a contemptible and
llanous part.

"Lady," he said at length, dropping his
yes under her steady gaze, whilst with the
oint of his rapier he appeared drawing figures
pon the floor, "for your humble slave to
tempt excuse for the conduct he has pursued
wards one so fair and exquisite, would, I
ar, be vain."

"I am then right, Sir," she returned, "in
njecturing from your words and presence
ere, that in Sir Raoul de Brabant I behold the
erson through whose instrumentality I have
een brought hither, and so long kept in con-
nement."

"Such, I fear, lady," replied the knight,
ith assumed hardihood, "will be found to be
e case."

The suspicions of Bertha, which had always
rped upon the King, still were wide of the
uth, as she even yet supposed the mercenary
d acted under the monarch's orders in the
usiness.

"And who, Sir Knight," she continued,
as had the hardihood to employ you in so

base and villanous an act,—an act which will go far to degrade you from the title of chivalry your former deeds of fame have earned you, and display you to the world as a base recreant—a coward unfit to breathe where men of honour assemble,—no longer knight, but a scoundrel knave*.

The hot blood which flowed in the veins of a Daundelyonne, was now indeed fairly aroused and the mercenary was for the moment astonished at the fierce eye she bent upon him. He, however, endeavoured to carry it off in as gallant a style as he could command.

“Alas, lady,” he said, throwing himself on one knee, “I have already pleaded that all attempt at excuse would be even worse than the crime I have committed against one so exquisite. In your own surpassing beauty you must seek the cause of my offence. Love, Lady, love strong as death, hath led me thus to err; a crime for which I am the more hopeful of pardon, since the exciting cause is

* When a knight was degraded, among other ceremonies the herald proclaimed him “No longer knight, but a scoundrel knave.”

some sort made a sufferer whilst she in-
acts her torments."

The lady started back either in real or
assumed amazement as she listened to the
confession of the knight, and the most concen-
trated and haughty expression of scorn ap-
peared in her regal features.

"Love for me, Sir Raoul of Brabant!" she
exclaimed; "for me, whom thou hast scarce
beheld thrice! Thou art surely mad to urge
so ridiculous an excuse for thy villany."

"Nay, Lady," urged the Knight; "say
rather for my boldness in wooing. The Lady
Bertha Daundelyonne need scarce be told that
she who once has the misfortune to encounter
that ray of loveliness can never hope for hap-
piness again. I have but done that which all
men if they dared, would attempt, and made
the prize my own. In fine, Lady," continued
the Knight, rising to his feet, as he grew more
assured, "I have to crave your pardon for the
stratagem I have used in bringing you within
the shelter of my towers, and indeed saving
you from the unlicensed passion of the King.
I have wooed as a soldier should woo his bride,

and the daughter of a soldier I trust will, after a moment's reflection, better appreciate my suit."

"The daughter of a soldier, sir," returned the Lady, "will better appreciate Sir Raoul de Brabant, if he strive instantly to repair the wrong he has done by restoring her to the protection of her parent: otherwise he will find the awakened wrath of that parent as quick and fatal as the monarch of the forest from which he derives his name."

"It may not be, Lady," returned the Knight, "nor will Sir Gilbert Daundelyonne ever look upon his haughty daughter again, but as the bride of him you scorn. Remember," he continued, "you are now in my power, far from all help; alone, without the companionship of a single female, except the faithful dependent who attends us here. Nay, 'tis useless to discuss the matter further. I give you till midnight to consider of my suit, when the priest shall attend us in the hall, and everything be in readiness for the celebration of our nuptials. Nay," continued the vain Knight, angered at the apparent disgust with which his suit

as received, "you shall either become the willing bride of Sir Raoul of Brabant, or I will have you dragged by force to the altar."

"I will proclaim thee through Christendom," answered the astonished Bertha, "for the stain of thine order: at the very footstool of John of England will I proclaim thee, for reckless as he is, he could never sanction such villany."

"It will be useless, Lady," said the Knight, tiring; "I have royal sanction for what I do. Farewell; I grant you the indulgence you have named, and then no earthly power can alter my determination."

"Nay, for the love of Heaven," said the lady, losing her firmness, "hear me, Sir Knight, but one word."

The Knight, however, was gone; the door closed, and the ponderous lock revolved in its turning, as Bertha sank in a swoon upon the floor.

Although Sir Roaul de Brabant lived in an age when the most unscrupulous conduct was sometimes practised towards the gentler sex with impunity, he well knew that his present adventure was likely to bring him into considerable

hazard, both with the English monarch and the friends of the Lady; he, however, trusted to the secret services he had performed for a ready pardon from John; and considering that when once fairly married, the Knight of Daundelyonne would be wise enough to make the best of it, he hoped that in the end matters would turn out entirely to his own satisfaction. He also was aware that Sir Gilbert, whose wrath he, in truth, feared more than any other danger, was at present not only out of the royal favour, but likely, if he presumed even to make his appearance, to be subjected to punishment. As far, also, as such a man could feel the passion of love, he was enamoured of the exceeding beauty of his captive.

The reception he had met with from her had a little dashed his self-conceit; for he considered his burly person irresistible amongst the fair sex, and he gave himself no little credit for the strictly honourable way in which—the object of his passion being completely in his power,—he meant to behave to her.

Meanwhile, in preparation for the ceremony, and for the feast he intended to give to the

companions he had brought with him, the day passed, whilst he himself retired to his chamber, in order to sleep off the fatigue of his long and hurried journey.

Those also who were not immediately on duty in the chateau, were glad to snatch a short repose, more especially that they knew not how soon their services would be again required for the road.

Amongst the men-at-arms who "quitted not the harness bright," and who watched beside the guard-room fire of the gate-house, sat the disguised monarch and his equerry, and perhaps of all that reckless company none appeared more light-hearted and jovial.

They dined, they drank, they trolled forth the catch, and they shouted in their glee with the merriest there. It was precisely in such a situation and scene that John most enjoyed life, and most completely got rid of the secret monitor which tugged at his heart-strings, and reminded him of his evil deeds.

Mauluc, however, kept a steady eye upon all that was going on. He knew the hour at which the marriage ceremony was to be per-

formed ; and, as he occasionally lounged the court-yard with others of the guard, he picked up all the news of the interior, which he carefully conveyed to his royal master. Further, although it was somewhat dangerous and contrary to orders to straggle far from the chateau—he managed towards evening to hold a short parley with the leader of the royal party, which, according to previous direction, with their horses piqueted in a convenient spot, were lying, perdu, in the forest, not a quarter of a mile in rear of the building.

So passed the day ; the evening fell, the shadows of night descending upon the chateau, the hour approached which Raoul had fixed for the celebration of nuptials.

CHAPTER IX.

A WEDDING PARTY.

And, will you, nill you, I will marry you.

SHAKESPERE.

WHEN the unhappy Bertha returned to a full consciousness of her situation, she felt almost reduced to a state of despair. Hope, "the medicine of the miserable," seemed to have deserted her; and all the courage and pride of her race was for the moment prostrated before the fate which now seemed inevitable. How she succeeded in passing that long and wearisome day with such a prospect awaiting its termination, without losing her reason, she often wondered in after-life.

She was now, she found, a close prisoner; and, in order that she might have full opportunity of considering the proposals her admirer had made, with the exception of a visit from

her accustomed attendant, she was left to the uninterrupted enjoyment of her own thoughts during the entire day. Like the condemned wretch who marks the departing moments as they shorten the period of existence, so did the unhappy lady feel the fleeting time glide on towards the dark hour of her life. Left thus to her own dismal reflections, without the consolation of a friend to consult in her utmost need, her mind became a perfect chaos. During which she resolved on the most desperate course, rather than submit to the hated surgery proposed to her.

Consigning a small poniard which she always carried in her bosom, she resolved, as she gazed upon its glittering blade, that the hour which gave her to her hateful suitor should see it plunged in her heart.

As the day wore on, it appeared gloomy and ominous as her own miserable prospects; and as night approached, the increasing wind blew a perfect hurricane; whilst the deep-mouthed thunder, which had gradually rumbled from a distance, now crashed immediately over the chateau, preceded by vivid flashes of

lightning, which darted in ghastly streaks, and seemed sporting with the different articles of furniture in her chamber. At any other period, the warfare of the elements would have greatly terrified her ; but at the present moment, and in the absence of all communication with her fellow-creatures, it served to withdraw her thoughts in some measure from her own griefs.

At length the hour approached which promised to consign her to a fate she considered worse than death in its worst shape ; and throwing herself on her knees before the crucifix on her table, she prayed for strength to enable her to escape its terrors. The next minute, the door of her prison-house was thrown open, and a couple of the Knight's attendants stood before her.

Sir Raoul had been true to his word, and although he avoided once more visiting his captive alone, before the ceremony, he had given directions to his myrmidons, that if the lady declined giving her attendance at the altar, they were to convey her thither by force. All monition and entreaty she therefore found

unavailing. Her stern summoners had not the power, even if they had the will, to disobey their instructions; and as they advanced to seize her in their powerful gripe, all the indulgence she could procure from them, was permission that the old crone who had been her jailer, might accompany her.

"Offer no further violence, sirs," she said scornfully, as she threw her veil over her lovely countenance. "I put my confidence in that Being who never deserts those who trust in his aid. Lead on: I attend you."

The midnight bell tolled on with the drowsy race of night, as the bridal party assembled in the great hall of the Chateau Birslenon. Traces of the former grandeur of the building were yet to be seen in this apartment, although in the hands of its present possessor the place itself was little better than a sort of robber-hold: and being mostly filled with a garrison composed of devils rather than men, had been the scene of many a cruel and atrocious piece of villany.

The proud banner, however, of its former proprietor, whom the place no longer knew,

hung in tattered shreds from either side of the battered roof, shadowy and frail as the cobwebs with which they were incrustated. The helmet, too, the shield, and the ponderous armoury, which had blackened in the burning suns of Palestine, seemed to hang as mournful emblems of a noble race, now extinct and forgotten in the very halls they had reared in their pride and prosperity.

As the Lady Bertha was conducted into the hall, she found it occupied by the assembled nobility, which consisted of the expectant bridegroom, the monk he had procured to officiate, —as he wished to give publicity to the nuptials amongst his own followers—several of his vassals and men-at-arms.

The Knight himself, divested of his heavy iron armour, now shone out in as gay a suit of habiliments as the haste and circumstances of the occasion would permit; and, in his own opinion, was a most winning figure for a lady's lover. Availing himself of the trunk-mails which were opened to be in the apartment of the chateau uninhabited, he had arrayed himself in a long tunic of white cloth trimmed with gold, and

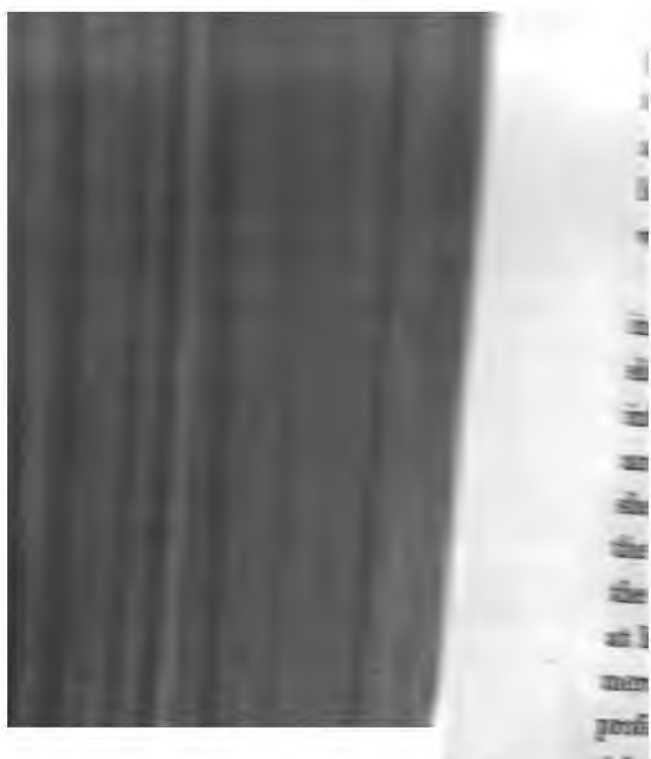
gathered in at the waist by a jewelled girdle, which also contained his anelace, or dagger, the hilt of which was set with precious stones. His hosen were of crimson cloth, powdered with gold, and the points of his black velvet shoes were so long that they were fastened to his knees by glittering chains.

The lamps, which burned in a sort of rude iron cressets, here and there pendant from the roof, shed a flaring and lurid glow around. A long table occupied the centre of the apartment, on which were spread the viands for the feast which was immediately to follow the marriage; and at which the only person at present seated was the officiating priest, a corpulent and jolly-looking churchman, who seemed to gloat in anticipation over the dainties he was to share after the ceremony. At the upper end of the hall, and upon the raised dais, stood a large crucifix, elaborately carved in oak, which had been hastily torn down from the ruinous chapel of the building. This, together with a heavy oaken table, containing two flaring wax tapers in large silver candlesticks, formed the altar.

Few situations could be more wretched than that to which Bertha Daundelyonne was now reduced. Alone and unfriended, at the mercy of a coarse-minded ruffian, she was dragged to the altar like some criminal to the block. As her conductors led her into the hall, her persecutor stepped from the midst of his assembled party with jaunting step and affected marriage, and himself conducted her towards the upper end of the apartment.

"Permit me, Lady," he said, placing his hand with offensive freedom upon her veil, 'to lift the envious curtain which hides us from that heaven of beauty we are so near."

The lady drew back, and raising her veil, gazed eagerly around her, displaying a countenance which, although pallid and deathlike in hue, was still far beyond anything to which the painted flourish of the Knight's tongue could at the moment have likened it. It appeared yet more lovely from the contrast it presented to the grim features and dark frowning looks of those immediately around, and the iron visors of the men-at-arms who,



Prelude to the soaking to which he meant anon to submit himself, so far returned, that he began to consider there might be disagreeable consequences attending the officiating minister of so unscrupulous a marriage. His eye wandered from the well-spread board and sparkling liquors to the distressed suppliant at his feet, and then to the countenance of his employer, with a sort of drunken doubt as to the respectability of his situation.

“Sir Raoul de Brabant,” he at length stammered out, “I have been summoned here to officiate at the holy ceremony of marriage, and to partake of the savoury viands your board displayeth, with yourself and the noble bride. Nevertheless, I hardly knew the lady was not a consenting party to her own nuptials, nay, that she had such an insuperable aversion to be linked in holy matrimony. Certes, this passes; and I had rather take counsel with my superior ere I proceed in the business.”

Sir Raoul was considerably annoyed at the scruples of his chaplain, which he by no means expected. He resolved to overrule his objection; and taking the churchman aside,

desired him to proceed instantly with the ceremony.

"Might not a short delay be granted?" urged the priest. "Methinks, if your honour would but so far respite this fair damsel, as to permit the supper to be served ere the ceremony take place, we might reason with her on the propriety of dismissing the fears with which she seems, in sooth, overcome. A stoop or two of claret might do much towards reassuring both of us; for, truth to say, I am myself somewhat overcome with flatulence and the fumes of an empty stomach."

"What, ho, there!" cried the Knight, "a cup of wine for the holy friar. I will grant no delay, Priest," he continued; "and by my halidame, if you proceed not instantly with the ceremony, I will have thy shaven crown stripped over thine ears like the red cap of some juggling cardinal." The monk shuddered, for he well knew that in matters of hardness and cruelty, the Knight was a man of his word.

"I have then no choice in the matter," he said; "nevertheless, I take this goodly con-

any to witness, it is an enforced ceremony. act upon compulsion. Our Lady have pardon upon me for the sin!"

"Buy out thy pardon, if sin there be," said Sir Raoul with a sneer, "with the rich guerdon I pay thee. Meanwhile, proceed with your summary at once, lest I hand thee over to the tender mercies of my people here, who will take out an enforced penance in stripes upon thy hypocritical carcase."

"Nay, then, my scruples are overruled," said the Monk in a hurry. "No man can withstand threats and bribery at the same time. Nevertheless, I wash my hands of the whole affair, as I wash my throat with this goblet of hippocras. It is an enforced ceremony, and I am the martyr. I wish this lady every happiness in her choice—no, not choice either,—in her martyrdom—marriage, I would say. Holy mother, how catholic this liquor is! nevertheless, I would my shoes had been filled with flint stones ere I put them on to obey the summons hither."

Thus saying, the threatened churchman took

his missal, bottom upwards in his hand, and prepared to commence the ceremony.

The courage of Bertha, which had hitherto sustained her, in the hope of being able to interest the priest in her favour, seemed now about to give way. She appeared almost unable to support herself, and as her hand appeared to be searching for something in the bosom of her tunic, she leaned against one of the pillars of the hall for support.

At this moment, however, an armed figure which had been standing in the gloom somewhat behind the lady, suddenly advanced to her side and whispered hope and comfort in her ear.

"Be of good courage," he said to her in a low voice, whilst the priest was fumbling with his missal, "succour will come when you least expect it."

The lady startled and turned eagerly towards the speaker; but the figure withdrew within the shadow of the pillar behind which he had been standing, and placed a finger upon the bars of his helmet, as if to caution

her to silence. As the monk commenced the ceremony, he again approached and once more addressed her—

“Put your trust in Heaven and assent to the matter in hand,” he said. “Succour, I repeat, will come, whence you least expect favour.”

The Brabançon who now saw his hopes on the eve of being realized, already began to congratulate himself on the happiness of possessing so exquisite a bride, whilst the fate of the hapless Bertha seemed about to be sealed.

The old adage, however, of the cup and the lip, was in the present instance exemplified: for, ere the priest had hiccuped half a dozen words, one of the spectators, who to all appearance from his outward habiliments, was a follower of the bridegroom, at this moment quietly stepped up to the altar, and, after regarding the bemused monk for a moment, lifted his sheathed rapier, and dealt him so severe a blow upon the knuckles that he struck the missal from his hands.

“Hold!” he said to the astonished eccle-

siastic, whose fingers ached with the severity of the blow. "Methinks, in a matter of so much importance as the marriage of one of the royal wards, there are other parties to be consulted besides the bride, the bridegroom, and the officiating minister."

The voice of the speaker, as it issued through the closed visor of his helm, sounded harsh and grating on the Brabançon's ear, whilst all assembled gazed in wonder and amazement as to what was about to happen next. With a countenance in which fear, astonishment, and indignation, produced a somewhat ludicrous expression, the impatient bridegroom continued to gaze upon the bold intruder for some moments, ere he could find words to demand the meaning of this interruption.

The voice at first had struck him with consternation, but as he marked the outward favour of the stranger he somewhat recovered his self-possession.

"Now, by all the saints of Hainault, Nevers, and Ponthieu," he said, "but this is something strange! Speak, Sir Knave, is it a jest thou

at putting upon us, or what, in the fiend's name, is the meaning of so impudent a proceeding, and what art thou?"

"An unbidden guest, we fear, at your nuptials, Sir Knight," returned the other. "Nevertheless, one methinks whose consent and presence might have been asked; since the nuptials of a royal ward should at least be graced by some one having authority from the King, lest her possessions become forfeit to his immediate lord."

"And who art thou, then," faltered forth the Brabançon, "who wearest the badge of one of my followers, and yet speakest of being in the service of John of England?"

"John of England himself!" returned the other, unfastening the visor of his helm and uncovering the veritable features of the King, he threw the casque upon the pavement of the hall, "John of England himself, a poor friend of thine own, Sir Raoul de Brabant—who would fain see thee properly mated and decently wedded, and therefore are we here an unbidden guest to your chateau here. What say ye, my masters all?" continued

the King, throwing himself into a chair, stood near, and gazing around upon the astonished and dismayed party, many of whom sank upon one knee, "methinks, we have no reason to feel slighted in this matter, Raoul de Brabant having made choice of the fairest ward we possessed in our English dominions, hath not even named to us the day of his wedding, or invited us to the feast."

CHAPTER X.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

still pays haste, and leisure answers leisure;
both quit like, and measure still for measure.

SHAKESPEARE.

he sepulchre "opened its ponderous
jaws" before his feet, the mercenary
urce have looked more aghast; and
gazed upon that dark swarthy coun-
as it grinned in horrible mockery at his
dreadful eye fixed in terrible ruin upon
l face, he seemed perfectly paralyzed
. At first he thought the figure be-
was an apparition. But, as his
n ran over the outward habiliments
ing, he was suddenly struck with the
d he immediately saw that his fate
d unless he could contrive to escape.
his eye over the assemblage imme-
round, whilst the King sat enjoying

his dismay, it suddenly struck the mercenary that John had in one of his half-insane moods ventured thus to thrust himself into his stronghold unattended; in which case he resolved to make him bitterly rue his temerity, and at the same time escape with his intended bride.

One who had been so deep a participator in the secret villanies of John, and had rendered him so many services in aid of his deep and diabolical schemes, well knew that the Monarch would be glad of any pretext to cancel the obligation he was under to such an instrument, "even with the bloody payment of his death." Thus, then, the sometime confidant of dangerous majesty, the abductor of a princess of Brittany, the secret contriver of death and torture towards the innocent Arthur, found himself confronted before his employer, "the poisoned chalice commended to his own lips." Like the wolf at bay, he considered his only chance of escape was by a bold dash at his opponent.

"Your Highness," he said, after recovering his self-possession, "has not done well to venture upon bearding the lion in his den."

"Say, rather," said John with a sneer, "in tracking the fox into his hole. But we are, however, not altogether unattended in our visit. We come a jolly company to your bridal feast, Sir Knight, and mean to taste the viands you have prepared here."

The pallid features of the mercenary turned still more deathlike as his eye sought the lower end of the hall in which the royal guards were now assembled. Escape, he saw, was out of the question, and all resistance, with the handful of men composing his own garrison, vain. His people had evidently been surprised and the place was entirely in possession of his foes.

It has been observed, that the insolence of base minds in success is boundless, and that it would scarce admit of a comparison, did not themselves furnish us with one when reverse bows them to baseness and servility. Such was the case in the present instance ; the Knight casting himself to the earth before the King, and in the most abject manner craving pardon and begging mercy at his hands.

Meanwhile, during the foregoing scene,

whilst joy, astonishment, and dismay alternately possessed Bertha Daundelyonne, she seemed to have been almost forgotten by the principal actors. At the first interruption she thought some friendly hand was about to interfere in her behalf. The next moment, however, her astonishment at the sudden appearance of the King naturally gave place to terror when she found that to his interference she owed the present interruption to so fatal a marriage. For the moment, she thought of endeavouring to escape, and had actually withdrawn a pace from the throng, and looked eagerly around, when the same mysterious figure who had before addressed her, on observing the movement, again glided from his concealment and placed himself by her side.

"Remain quiet," he said, "for the present. To attempt escape at this juncture would be ruin. Enough: when the time comes I will give the signal. Then, and not till then, make the effort."

"Am I right in supposing I recognise the voice of an old and tried follower, one who

er deceived the Daundelyonne?" inquired rtha.

"Mystery magnifies danger as the fog the
," replied the other. "Nevertheless, anon
shall appear in my own favour. I cannot
y more whilst your attendant stands beside
u. Mark what follows, for the drama is
w in progress, and your cue will come in
od time."

When the vile and remorseless fall into
nds wicked and cruel as their own, we read
eir fate with horror, but no jot of pity is
lled forth. The irate King was now in the
ight of his glory, and, as he turned his
inous glance from the humbled mercenary,
s eye rested upon the extraordinary figure of
e malignant old hag, who, at the request of
rtha, had accompanied her into the hall.
she stood beside her lovely charge the
erable crone appeared even more hideous
n nature had made her.

"Ha!" said the King, after regarding the
ed dame with curiosity, and as if communing
h the thoughts so singular-looking an indi-
nal had conjured up, "Ha!" he said, turning

to the knight, and affecting a clemency the malignancy of his smile belied, "R Raoul de Brabant; we came hither to thy wedding; and by our Lady's grace not hence till we have seen thee mated a man of thy merit. Ha! by Sair what think ye, Sir Walter?" he continued. Mauluc, having conducted the guard in hall now approached and stood before master's chair. "One who hath played bold a game for a bride,—nay, who hath so many men, ourself into the bargain, not to be altogether baffled. What think ye, Sir Walter? Albeit we find it inconvenient to bestow the heiress of Daundelyon on our worthy ally here, what think ye," he said to the hideous old woman, "of mating with yonder blooming beauty? Methinks splendid an alliance would better suit an aspiring gallant."

This idea afforded so much amusement to the King and Mauluc that they laughed for some moments. At length the king arose, and approaching Bertha Daundelyon himself handed her to the seat he had

viously occupied. He then desired Mauluc to lead the ill-favoured attendant forward.

"Lead that lovely specimen of the female sex to the altar, Sir Walter Mauluc," he said. "Thou shalt perform the part of father to the damsel, and give her away. Nay," he continued jeeringly to the Brabançon, "'tis hard, Sir Raoul, to be altogether unwived. We therefore give our royal assent to your changing from the lovely Bertha Daundelyonne, and fixing your choice upon yonder peerless specimen with the curved back. So much loveliness, methinks, seldom falleth to the share of mortal man."

To paint the astonishment and dismay of the mercenary at this stage of the proceedings would be difficult. He saw that his fate was sealed, and that, like the cat with its captured prey beneath its claws, his tormentor was determined to sport with the victim ere he give it the *coup de grace*. Much as he loved life, and feared death, he would almost have preferred torture to the disgrace of such a marriage. But he well knew that John

“~~It is not~~ ~~that~~ ~~such~~ a project would be
~~best to~~ ~~have~~ ~~it~~ ~~done~~.”

“~~Let~~ ~~me~~ ~~not~~ ~~lose~~ ~~this~~ ~~dignity~~,” he said to
 the King. “~~Let~~ ~~me~~ ~~not~~ ~~lose~~ ~~this~~ ~~dignity~~, and before the
 eyes of my people your Majesty will scarce
 be able to afford them me. Remember, my
~~father~~ ~~has~~ ~~been~~ ~~the~~ ~~many~~ ~~services~~ ~~I~~ ~~have~~ ~~per-~~
~~formed~~.”

“~~Let~~ ~~me~~ ~~not~~ ~~lose~~ ~~this~~ ~~dignity~~ to the unhappy
~~man~~ ~~of~~ ~~France~~,” whispered the mysterious
 person who had before addressed Bertha, and
 at this moment placed himself close be-
 side the Bretonman: “didst thou heed the
~~last~~ ~~and~~ ~~unhappy~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~crushed~~ ~~worm~~ ~~when~~
~~in~~ ~~thy~~ ~~power~~! Who so dreads punishment,
~~let~~ ~~me~~ ~~not~~ ~~lose~~ ~~this~~ ~~dignity~~ ~~deserves~~ ~~it~~, ~~dreads~~ ~~it~~.”

The Bretonman started and looked con-
 founded, while his vaunter unfastening the
~~case~~ ~~of~~ ~~his~~ ~~helmet~~, as he brushed up the
~~crest~~ ~~of~~ ~~his~~ ~~hood~~, displayed
 the plumage of Gondibert the Jester.

“~~What~~ ~~our~~ ~~bold~~ ~~cousin~~,” said the King, as
 soon as he recognised him, “hast thou too
~~thrust~~ ~~thy~~ ~~warley~~ ~~coat~~ ~~into~~ ~~harness~~, and ac-

ompanied us? By the mass, thou art welcome as flowers in May; we wanted but thy allies here to make our happiness complete."

"Nay, cousin John," replied the Jester, "I thought when I saw your royalty assuming this present disguise there would be sport toward. I therefore crushed my poor limbs in a coat covering also, and here I am to assist in the diversions. Come, Sir Knight," he added, turning to the mercenary, "we trifle time here with delay. I commend the wisdom you have displayed in the selection; it is said that in choosing his mate a man should consider which he most wants, a wife or a nurse. Here you will find yourself accommodated with both."

The mercenary bent a savage and threatening look upon the Jester. His hand stole towards his anelace, but with a strong effort, he suppressed his rage. His eye traversed the dark circle of attendants and men-at-arms around, as if to observe what chance there was for him, if he ventured to strike a blow for freedom, and in how far he might depend upon support from his own people; whilst the incor-

rigible Gondibert annoyed him by fresh taunts every moment.

"Tush, man," he said, as the Brabançon made a last appeal to the King ; "you do but swallow the pill you would have forced upon another. You promised yourself to take it gilded, but it now tastes bitter as aconite, or wolf's-bane, in the mouth. Hold your nose, man, and gulp : the dose must go down. Stand forth, my blooming Hebe," he continued, addressing the old dame ; "the viands fall from the spit, and the supper is ruined whilst we talk."

"Sir Walter Mauluc," said the Brabançon, "wilt thou, too, stand by and see thy friend, one who hath been sworn brother* to thee, thus sacrificed, without a word in his favour?"

"That will he, in sooth," said Gondibert. "Thou gettest no help at the hands of thy

* The "Fratres Jurati" of the middle ages were those knights who professed the most sincere and lasting friendship for each other, and called themselves sworn brothers in peace and war. They were sworn to aid each other in danger and adversity, and to divide equally all their acquisitions. The Count of Champagne, the Troubadour Prince, and Richard, the common friends of the Count, were all three *Fratres Jurati*.

worn brother, for thou hast checkmated him during thy firm friendship. Intimacy, I have observed, is oftener the father of deadly hate than firm friendship. Pshaw, man," he continued in a low voice, to the overwhelmed Brabançon. "Strike a blow for thine own freedom, in thine own hold. Call up your dragonhood, here around you, to the rescue."

"By the eternal devil!" exclaimed the mercenary, "thou sayest true. Up, dragons," he shouted, starting back, and unsheathing his sword like lightning. "Up, dragons, and help your chief."

The followers of Sir Raoul, although few in number, at the instigation of Gondibert, who had before secretly incited them to attempt the rescue of their captain, upon this summons rallied around their leader, and drew their weapons; whilst the royal guard at the same moment advancing upon them, a terrible scene of confusion ensued, during which the tables were overthrown, and the priest knocked down, and trodden under foot.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FLIGHT.

Rosalind. O, Jupiter! how weary are my spirits!

Touchstone. I care not for my spirits, if my legs were not weary.

Celia. I pray you, bear with me ; I cannot go any further.

Touchstone. For my part, I had rather bear with you, than bear you. Yet I should bear no cross if I did bear you ; for, I think, you have no money in your purse.

SHAKESPEARE.

DURING the confusion of the scene, and whilst the whole attention of the King was given to the capture of Sir Raoul, Gondibert seized upon the arm of Bertha, and led her through the press, towards the lower end of the hall.

"Quick !" he exclaimed. "This is the moment, which once neglected, never returns."

As he said this, he led his charge, unobserved, to the court-yard of the chateau, and hurried onward with her towards the main entrance of the building.

Are there no means of escape, but through principal entrance?" inquired Bertha. "If alas, I fear—"

Our chance is but a hungry one," returned Jester. "True, lady; but bad as the chance is, we must try it. Death and disaster are behind us, and no certainty of escape in front. But forward is the better word of command, in most cases. Yonder hath most likely called away the main body of the guard."

The next moment, as they passed under the dark arch of the gate-house, they were challenged. Gondibert immediately gave the counter-sign.

"It will not suffice," said the sentinel; "my orders are strict, to-night. No one can pass of the fortress."

"Orders are, doubtless, to be obeyed," replied Gondibert. "You have yours, I doubt not, and very sufficiently issued. Nevertheless, orders are sometimes to be superseded by superior commands. I am sent forward by the king's order, this moment delivered. Look ye,

friend, I bear his signet ; that, I opine, removes all doubt."

The man-at-arms hastily looked at the ring. It was, indeed, the royal signet ; but the instructions for his post had been so peremptory that he called to his superior from the sentry-guard-house within the tower.

The superior looked at the signet, doubtfully. "What turmoil is that within the building yonder?" he said.

"It is a mutiny amongst those scoundrels of Brabant," replied the Jester. "They have refused consent to the arrest of their leader. Nay, I recommend that you send off with as much assistance you can spare. The King may be endangered in this paltry riot."

"Pass out," said the officer, hastening to open the gate-house guard; and the next moment, Gondibert and his fair charge had safely crossed the draw-bridge. The rain was pouring down in torrents, as they gained the open space, and the Jester paused and considered for a moment ere he proceeded.—"Here we are, in the open world," he said ; "and which

rection to take, it passes my wisdom to decide. The night is dark as pitch, and the sky ours down mischief. Now, what's to be done?"

"Take any direction, good Gondibert," cried the Lady, "so it lead us from those hateful walls. The most savage hold in the wildest forest shall be a welcome refuge."

"Ah! that's vastly well observed," said the Jester; "and if I knew of any hold, be it savage or civil, I might adventure to find it. But here we are, in an unknown forest, in the dead of night, without horses to aid our escape; if our enemies fail in overtaking us, the wolves will not. In that case, I fear we shall find we had better have trusted to fortune where we were."

"Alas!" exclaimed Bertha; "then I fear, good Gondibert, your kindness has but involved you in my own inevitable ruin. I am unable to advise."

"Nay," said Gondibert, "I meant not to dash your spirits unnecessarily; for Heaven knows, you will want all your energies this night. Ha! yonder vivid flash hath shown


me a vista in the wood: we will adventure down it. At least, we shall have some sort of shelter: and we must get out of this dismal forest, if possible, ere morning dawn."

"And whither, then, can we fly, Gondibert?" inquired Bertha. "I know of no refuge in this dreadful country."

"To England, if we can get there," replied Griffith. "But sooth to say, the chances seem against our reaching it."

It was indeed a dreadful night, in which to commence their escape. But, as the Jester wisely started with a view to re-assure his charge, there was likely to be worse fortune for them within doors than without; and the sooner they gained the shelter of the roughest thicket in the wood, the better. "We shall find no beasts of prey worse than the human foes we are leaving, fair lady," he concluded. "So here's for the thicket. We have, if I judge rightly, a short start of our enemies; for the eccentric John will be so taken up with the nuptials he has just thought of, that he will scarce rest till he has witnessed the performance of the ceremony. He will then

ther hang or imprison the bridegroom, ere
e take his supper; and, when seated at the
board, both you and I shall be missed,
quired, and sought for. But come, be of
ood courage, and droop not at the first dif-
culty. 'Tis the mind that fatigues the body.
obody knows what strength he has till he
y. 'Use legs and have legs,' is a good pro-
verb; and those who set out with but a
weak understanding, will find themselves
oth wiser stronger by exertion, than even
he vigorous who stand still and do no-
thing. Heavens! what a flash was there. The
ery trees look like spectres, and yet they are
ut trees after all, you see. So it is with the
ifficulties of life, most of which are of our
wn raising. And those hideous giants, which
ppear unconquerable, if we grapple them
solutely, we shall find but ordinary monsters
fter all. Therefore, courage lady; and let
ot our own minds depress our own bodies.
nly fancy you are going bat-fowling in the
oods, and you will forget miles, in anticipa-
on of sport."



- Now," he continued somewhat more securely, "we can make a cove on the other, where none would be likely to track us."

My lady moon would be of efforts for a brief space to find my way in this labyrinth.

The ardent desire of safety for themselves and their enemies, the necessity of the weather to help by the fugitives.

Gondibert, who was with his arm round the lady, went onward for some miles through the thunder, the flashes of lightning, the howling wind. But as

"Here's weather," he said, "to pour down upon the bare head of a lady, cradled in luxury and comfort!"

"Heed it not, Gondibert," said Bertha; "so we can attain but some shelter from our enemies, I care not for the storm. Is there no hut or shed you can find?"

"Nay," said Gondibert, "I know but little of these parts; but, from the pace we have travelled, and the direction we have taken, it strikes me there must be a sort of shelter not far from this very spot. Could we but gain it, I should say we were born lucky, notwithstanding all we have yet endured. I noted a ruinous building in this forest one day, when hunting with the King; it can't be many hundred yards from us. So, courage, Lady. Yet, hark! what sounds were those? Ah! by my fay, 'tis as I feared. The wolves are upon our track."

As Gondibert spoke, the hounding cry of wolves in full chase was plainly heard in the distance. The faithful heart of the Jester sank at the sound, for well he knew that, if these savage animals came upon them in any

number, they would both be torn to pieces in spite of all his efforts.

He stopped, and looked around him. The storm had somewhat subsided, whilst they had hurried onwards; and, as the clouds rolled beneath the moon, the scene on either side became more visible. His piercing eye seemed to penetrate into its very recesses. They had reached a part of the forest somewhat more open; its massive foliage, and thick tangled underwood, giving place to the prickling gorse and fern; the stunted oak only here and there spreading its broad arms across the wider space.

There are periods in men's lives when moments seem to supply the work of years. Such a period had the Jester now arrived at. The ominous howl of the wolf was in his ears; and, as his acute senses were bent to mark each object, in the hope of recognising the locality, he felt that moments were now precious as years to himself and companion.

"Our estate," he said "is that of the vessel in a fog. I know where the breakers lie, for I can hear them roar, but which way I am to

peer to avoid them I can hardly tell. On this spot of earth I have certainly been before, and hereabouts there is a ruinous hold, which we must gain in a few moments more or we perish. 'Tis now as in our course of life—the right direction leads to success, the wrong to death. Ha!" he continued, as the moon shone out more brightly, "either my eyes deceive me, or yonder is the spot I remember to have noticed. Haste, Lady!" he said, once more urging Bertha onwards. "Fight for it we must; but, when outnumbered, 'tis better to fight behind stone-walls than in the open plain."

Even while he spoke, the leader of the savage troop came ravening on. The Jester's eye had not deceived him. On a small mound, and so regular as to appear as if it were raised by artificial means, stood the remains of a strong fortress, partly encircled by a ruinous wall. For this he made with all speed; and leading the lady up the ascent, endeavoured to gain a small opening, or sally-port, situated in the flanking wall. It seemed, however, that the

race would be hotly contested. Could he succeed in gaining the sally-port, he might make a stand there, and with his ponderous sword keep the fierce animals at bay, whilst the lady sought some place of safety in the tower, but they were still some distance from it.

"Two legs make but a bad fight of it against four," he said; "we must make arms help legs, or all will be lost."

The foremost of the troop, a large and fearful-looking beast, at this moment sprang upon them, when, with one blow of his heavy blade Gondibert broke his back.

The fierce nature of the animals they had to contend against was now sufficiently apparent; for, as the brute rolled howling on the ground, his companions turned upon it, and tore it limb from limb.

"That's an offering wherewith to stay their stomachs for the present, at any rate," said Gondibert. "Hasten on, Lady, in Heaven's name, and try to gain the opening in the main wall of the tower, whilst I follow with more leisure, and give battle to these ravenous beasts."

"Nay, good Gondibert," said the terrified Bertha, "I will not consent to accept of safety unless you share it with me."

"On, then," urged Gondibert, "for the pack increases every minute. See how they swarm over the very scent of their carrion comrade, even though they have half devoured him. Ah! and here they come again!"

Few things in nature present a greater contrast than the same landscape under different aspects. The storm had now completely subsided; and as the bright moon shed her silver light over the grassy knoll upon which the ruin stood, the dark forest in the distance, and the trees in the space between, glittering with rain-drops, the whole scene presented a very different appearance from the same dismal-looking forest of a few minutes before. Could the fugitives have found time to mark its beauty, they would doubtless have enjoyed it. As it was, the fairest scene in nature was to them as the roughest quarry. They were striving for life amidst their savage foes. A few paces, and they would gain the shelter; but a miss, according to the old saying, is as

good as a mile; and, in spite of the desperate efforts of Gondibert, they were now completely brought to bay. The Jester, at this perilous juncture, seemed to have entirely thrown off his lighter character; and, as the wolves came on him, with his dagger in one hand, and his heavy blade in the other, he dealt his blows like no common warrior. On right, on left in front he swept the space before him, whilst step by step he retired towards the building. Being on higher ground, he was, for the moment, enabled to keep the animals from outflanking him, and tearing down the affrighted Bertha. But it was evident the unequal contest could not last much longer.

“Keep with me now, Lady,” he said; “more not a pace farther than I myself retire. The whole swarm are now upon us, and will have you down the moment you are beyond reach of my weapons.”

The wolves, now increased to about a dozen in number, and each in itself sufficiently powerful to cope with an unarmed man, had indeed almost succeeded in surrounding them, and cutting off their retreat. Already Gondibert

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retired to within half a dozen paces of ruin, when one of the animals, as he clove fellow down, sprang upon Bertha, and early succeeded in seizing her by the throat. The courage of a Daundelyonne did not desert in this dreadful emergency. She drew the pommel from her girdle, and smote the animal so truly that she succeeded in beating it down. Another and another, however, followed. Her outer garment was already torn in strips, and she was on the very eve of being pulled to the ground, when a strong arm seized her from behind, and hurling her within the door-way, with a heavy battle-axe smote right and left, clearing the space, and advanced to the aid of the brave Jester.

It was lucky for Gondibert that he was clad in harness of proof, as the wolves had, at that moment, completely succeeded, spite of his efforts, in closing upon him. Their dreadful fangs were tearing at the links of his chain-mail, as, wearied and outbreathed, his blows grew fainter and fainter. At that moment, however, a voice like a trumpet-call sounded in his ear; and as the heavy blows, delivered

as if by the arm of a giant, fell around him, he was enabled to gain the shelter of the ruin and rejoin his charge. Another minute, and their rescuer had also joined them; the ruinous door was closed, and they were in safety.

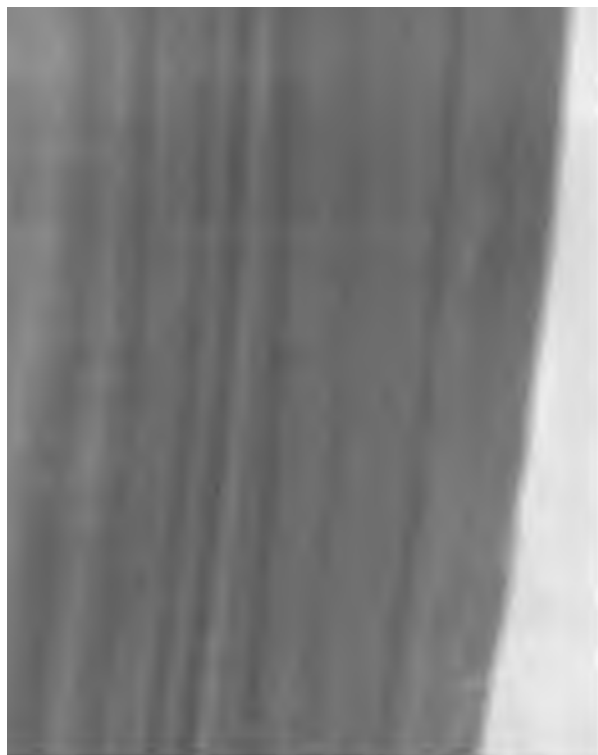
CHAPTER XII.

A NARROW ESCAPE.

I must comfort the weaker vessel, as doublet and hose ought to shew itself courageous to petticoat: therefore, courage, good Aliena.

THE rescue and escape of Bertha Daundelyonne had been so sudden and unexpected that it had appeared to her like one of those changeful events we sometimes remember in a dream. She had well nigh resigned herself to the horrid fate which appeared inevitable, when she was in an instant snatched from the very fangs of the fierce animals surrounding her, and placed in comparative safety. Still, until she was assured of the rescue of the faithful Gondibert, she refused to be comforted.

On her first being unceremoniously drawn within the small opening in the walls of the



On their preserver conducting the fugitives into the main apartment of the building, as the moonbeams streamed from the ruined window. Bertha saw that it was occupied by several armed men, who apparently had sought its shelter during the storm.

The excitement of the scenes she had so recently gone through, added to her previous long imprisonment and its consequent anxiety, proved too much for her, and as she reached the hall of the building she found her strength failing.

She gazed wildly upon the youth who had assisted in guarding her into the apartment, and next at the armed figures at its upper end, and then the whole scene swam before her eyes, and she sank into the arms of Gondibert in a swoon.

At first Gondibert looked around him with some anxiety, and, as his eye fell upon the dark iron-clad occupants of the apartment, he thought it not unlikely that they had fallen amongst a savage horde of banditti. The wretchedly situation and ruinous state of the build-

ing made such a supposition more than probable, the dark forests of France and Normandy at this period being infested with bands of outlaws and miscreants, whose trade was murder, rapine, and violence. But, as the rays of the moon shone upon the arms and armour of the assemblage, and he beheld the stately forms of the wearers, their crested helms and the devices upon the shields which hung at their backs, he became in a moment reassured. He found, indeed, that he was in presence of several of those English nobles whose forces had remained up to the present moment loyal to the King.

Meantime, whilst Gondibert, assisted by the youth who had accompanied them into the apartment, was endeavouring to recover Bertha from her swoon, their athletic protector advanced towards the upper end of the room, and addressed those assembled.

"I bring ye, my Lords," he said, "some fellow-travellers, to share with us the shelter this castle affords. 'Twas somewhat lucky I chanced whilst visiting our steeds below, to

ok forth upon the night without the walls, r by this time they had become the prey f wolves."

"They are welcome," replied a tall warrior f a commanding presence, who seemed the hief of the assemblage; "be they who or hat they may, they are welcome to such helter as this ruin affords."

The party, who had apparently been engaged in discussion of some matter of import, when they were interrupted by the entrance f Gondibert and his fair charge, upon seeing lady in distress, immediately gathered round er.

"Either my eyes deceive me in this uncertain light," exclaimed the person who had efore spoken, "or I behold the daughter of ir Gilbert Daundelyonne, who has so long een missing from the Court."

"You are quite right, my Lord of Salisbury," said Gondibert, who having placed his ir companion in a reclining posture now advanced. "You are quite right, my Lord of Salisbury; 'tis indeed the daughter of your metime friend and companion in arms; and

The first of these is the
 fact that the majority of
 the population of the
 United States is of
 European descent. This
 fact is of great importance
 in the study of the
 history of the United States
 because it is the basis of
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 States is of European
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 the United States because
 it is the basis of the
 culture and the institutions
 of the country.

libert ironically, "let us at least give the his due. Suffer me to plead for cousin in this instance. He, as I told you, opportunely came between this lady and marriage, and in so far played a virtuous and did a good action for once in his life. t men, my Lords, like fiery meteors and ts, are doubtless formed to do good—their courses occasionally are extremely ic."

Nay," said Salisbury, "I pr'ythee grant us a with your truisms, good Gondibert. Said'st not but now, that the hateful villain, who ready suspected as an accomplice in Prince ur's murder, was the abductor of the lady?" I did," replied Gondibert: "the burly ing with the broad back and the paunch; whom men call Raoul de Brabant, as evil-led, ill-tongued, and cowardly a caitiff as ever ped upon neat's leather; he was the man." Then by my knighthood," exclaimed Salisbury, "I swear to smite him with my dagger's t wherever I find the caitiff—even in the g's presence."

Nay, my Lord," remarked Gondibert,



cannot credit the report. I cannot suppose that John, with all his faults, would injure the realm of Brittany."

"Nay, then," said Gondibert, "you may take yourself to your castle of Chester as soon as you will, for I, myself, can set your mind at rest on that subject. The fair Breton hath been foully entrapped by the emissaries of my virtuous and courtly cousin John. It was not done so secretly but that my weak kinsman made discovery of the whole matter. Our acquaintance, Raoul de Brabant, had his ambitious finger in that pie also. 'Twas he who managed to betray the Princess into the hands of the emissaries sent by John, and she is by this time eating the bitter bread of captivity in the strong castle of Bristol, my master. God help her in her need."

It was extremely lucky for the fugitives that they had fallen in with a party of the English, who, indeed, had rendezvoused in this ruined fortress in order to discuss their particular griefs and the propriety of retiring altogether from a country and contest in which they no longer seemed to have the support of



an interview with John, who had been playing at hide and on the coast; but, on learning from Gondibert that the King of embarkation and merely what they resolved, without further provide for their own safety England without delay. Most chieftains were known to Sidney who had fled to England before, and Lord Salisbury immediately himself to escort his friend's own home. Such accommodation afforded was immediately put and the invalid being conveyed to a habitable chamber for the night signed to the charge of the

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CHAPTER XIII.

A DISAPPOINTED LOVER.


This goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me, than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours.

——— Man delights not me, nor woman neither.

SHAKESPEARE.

WHEN the Lord of Folkstone left his faithful attendant and her new-found relative, he rode rapidly for some distance in the direction which had been pointed out to him as that in which the English camp was situated.

Ere many miles had been gained, however, he found he had overrated his powers, and that his strength was not sufficiently restored to enable him to endure the weight of his harness and the fatigue of travelling. The depression of his spirits was equal to the weariness of his limbs.



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saw
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dis
tree
proc
neig
green
upon
night
only
murm
soothe
A
under

ship the world, its sea, its sky, its trees and all that it containeth, are as nought in gayer and more stirring scenes. The of one whom the "blind bow-boy" hath l, sinks into a state of morbid melancholy in solitude; and the young Lord of one accordingly found that he must, if ant to retain the semblance of a rational seek excitement amidst the warfare then around.

pirit like his, so gentle and so amiable in repose, felt bruised under present stances. The melancholy of his own its was too oppressive to bear, and he d to lose the remembrance of himself s griefs in the busy hum of the world. is resolved, he hoped to forget the all- ing passion which preyed upon his heart. he strove to aid that endeavour by che- g the bitter thought of the frailty and worthlessness of her he loved.

as all in vain. Amidst the turmoil of ar which then raged in the fields of ndy and Brittany—in the camp and of the great—in the listed field—at

the feast in the baronial hall, it was all in
vain. There was still the

“One fast remembrance, one sorrow that throws
Its bleak shade alike o’er our joys and our woes.”

The smile of beauty wooed him in vain.
The laugh of folly fell on his ear unheeded,
and the sallies of the witty were heard without
the smile of appreciation.

The high-born English noble, he of whom
all endeavoured to gain the regard, whose
matchless form, and high deeds achieved of
knightly fame, were the theme of every tongue
—he whom none apparently could oppose with-
out defeat, seemed, except when addressed to
the encounter in the listed or the battle-fields,
like some marble effigy of a tomb, his heart
as invulnerable as the harness beneath his
surcoat.

Turning his thoughts from the present war
between the French and English monarchs, he
sought the different courts of Europe. In
Russia, in Lithuania, in Poland, Prussia, West-
phalia, and in Germany, wherever danger was
to be found and honour to be gained, his
name was to be heard of.

Yet amidst the excitement of such a life, and in the brilliant and joyous scenes in which he mixed, where the softest music floated upon the perfumed air of the brilliant assemblage, nay, whilst a princess sought to win his favour, still would come the remembrance of that night upon the wold, after the field of Mirabeau. That hallowed form never to be forgotten, bent over him in his helpless state, and a pang sharp as the dagger of the assassin, would touch his heart. The voice tuneful as a silver bell was in his ear even in his dreams; that radiant face was anxiously watching over him and caring for his safety; and that battle-field, so accompanied, seemed worth all the brilliant scenes he had since gone through. Wherever he went, although he refused to own it even to himself, he seemed seeking some shadow lost to him for ever. At length taking palmer's staff and cockled hat, he turned his steps from scenes in which he found no interest; and traversing the arid deserts of Palestine, he hung up his arms at the holy sepulchre, and returned like the hunted hare to the spot from whence he had started in the race of life.

Days, weeks, months, and years had passed since the Lord of Folkstone had seen his native woods and towers. His mother slept in the tomb, and a great part of his ample domain had been wrested from him by the strong arms of more powerful neighbours.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HOSTILE FLEET.

A thousand businesses are brief in hand,
And Heaven itself doth frown upon the land.

The Dauphin is preparing hitherward,
Where Heaven, he knows, how we shall answer him.

SHAKESPERE.

WE must now, with the license occasionally granted to novelists, take leave to glide over a small portion of time in our history, and following the footsteps of the English monarch, waft our readers across the Channel, and once more present our *dramatis personæ*, and draw our scene upon English ground ; which, it will be remembered we had left, after the departure of the royal power, as the immortal bard has so well described it :—

“ Guarded with grandsires, babies, and old women,
Either past, or not arrived to, pith and puissance.”

From a chamber in that splendid English



The smile or beauty won
The laugh of folly fell on him
and the sallies of the witty won
the smile of appreciation.

The high-born English nobles
all endeavoured to gain the
matchless form, and high ducal
knightly fame, were the theme
—he whom none apparently could
out-defeat, seemed, except with
the encounter in the listed or
like some marble effigy of a
as invulnerable as the harp
surcoat.

Turning his thoughts from
between the French and English

Yet amidst the excitement of such a life, and in the brilliant and joyous scenes in which he mixed, where the softest music floated upon the perfumed air of the brilliant assemblage, and whilst a princess sought to win his favour, still would come the remembrance of that night upon the wold, after the field of Mirabeau. That allowed form never to be forgotten, bent over him in his helpless state, and a pang sharp as the dagger of the assassin, would touch his heart. The voice tuneful as a silver bell was in his ear even in his dreams; that radiant face was anxiously watching over him and striving for his safety; and that battle-field, so accompanied, seemed worth all the brilliant scenes he had since gone through. Wherever he went, although he refused to own it even to himself, he seemed seeking some shadow lost to him for ever. At length taking palmer's staff and cockled hat, he turned his steps from scenes in which he found no interest; and traversing the arid deserts of Palestine, he hung up his arms at the holy sepulchre, and returned like the hunted hare to the spot from whence he had started in the race of life.

firmness whose towers are reared upon the dizzy heights of Dover, the anxious eye of the governor of the castle looked out upon the main of France. They who gaze upon this splendid specimen of a Norman castle in the present time, can form no proper idea, even noble-looking as it yet remains, of its aspect in the reign of John, before those unsightly alterations and additions consequent upon a more modern style of fortification had destroyed its feudal grandeur. On the present occasion, its towers and walls were bristling with the bright arms of those who day and night, watched from its ramparts, faced both sea and land-ward.

The return of John seemed ominous to the land he revisited: since England, during the time he had been engaged in his foreign wars, might be said to have slumbered in a sort of peaceful security and repose. At the period, however, of his setting foot upon the shores of his native land, it was visited by a dreadful pestilence, which struck dismay into the inhabitants from one end of the kingdom to the other.

Rail as was this visitation of heaven's wrath,

was but a slight foretaste of the horrors consequent upon his misrule. It would, indeed, be as difficult for us to picture, as for our readers to conceive, the accumulated misery which everywhere prevailed. Added to the horrors of an intestine war, and its consequent state of disease and famine, the nation was on a sudden deprived of all exterior exercise of religion. The altars were despoiled of their ornaments; the crosses, reliques, and statues of the saints removed and laid prostrate, were hidden from the view of man, as if the very air itself was profaned, and carried pollution in its blast. The bells of the churches, conveyed from the steeples, were, with everything sacred, covered up and concealed from sight. The monks, shut out from the sinful world, celebrated mass with closed doors; no living person but the clergy being admitted to the holy institution. The very dead were not allowed burial in consecrated ground; but cast into ditches and highways. Marriage was celebrated in the church-yards amongst the tombs. The people were prohibited the use of meat, as in times of

the most rigorous penance ; and were debarred from all rural diversions, pleasures, and entertainments. Nay, they were even forbidden to see towards each other the commonest civilities of life, or even to salute each other when they passed. With beards unshaven, and with countenances of the deepest distress, consequent upon the immediate apprehension of divine vengeance and indignation, men crept about dejected and miserable, as if in search of their dishonourable graves."

The kingdom, in short, was under an interdict : and John, in order to oppose his temporal to the spiritual terrors of Rome, immediately confiscated the estates of the clergy, banished many of the prelates, and, placing guards upon the convents, kept the monks in close confinement, scarce allowing them from their own estates sufficient sustenance to support life. Nay, he turned the entire body of the clergy into ridicule ; and, endeavouring to show the licentiousness of their lives, held them up to the contempt and reproach of his distressed subjects.

Upon the heels of this dreadful state of affairs came foreign invasion—

“Now powers from home and discontents at home,
Meet in one line, and vast confusion waits,
As doth a raven on a sick fallen beast,
The imminent decay of wrested pomp.”

Such was England at the period in which we resume the thread of our story.

As the eye of Hubert de Burgh roamed over the main of waters, he beheld the swelling sails of the invading force, which for many days had been expected. He watched it, as it grew from the smallness of a flight of insects to the appearance of a formidable fleet, and then he was assured it was the Dauphin's power he saw approaching.

Slowly and majestically they sailed onwards whilst yet in the distance, as the sun glanced upon their gorgeous sails, looking like the graceful movements of a flock of sea-fowl upon the sparkling wave. But as the fleet neared the English coast, and the shadows of evening darkened upon the sea, all that was bright and beautiful became mixed with much that was ominous and terrible; till, like a dark

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wer—look upon yonder power of dauntless
irits floating upon the sparkling wave—look
on the dark mass of iron men, whose fierce
es are now bent upon those foemen in their
ips—look at this fortress itself, and all that
contains: nay, who own thee as their lord,
d move at thy bidding as one man, raising
e war-shout as thou orderest, and making
e air whistle with their shot, or bending the
ee in submission, if thou bid them yield—
ok upon all this, noble Hubert, and with the
nsciousness of thine own power, wisdom, and
urage, to move the springs of the battle, tell
e again, whether of the two, wouldst thou
ther, play out the game, or leave the glories
such a world? Tush! man, never say the
rd. Thy heart is in the cause. Thou wouldst
ieve to die at this moment; aye, more than
hen thou first buckled on the brand and
cked a courser at fourteen years old.”

“Thou art ever right, Gondibert,” replied
ubert; “I do indeed feel all thou sayest.
would not die—at least, I would fain show
y truth and loyalty in the coming strife.
eaven only knows what is yet in store for

this devoted land; but the prospect is dark enough for us all."

"Aye," returned Gondibert; "and they who can spy through the murky air still look upon a confused scene of carnage and carrion death. Heard ye the news abroad this morning! Even the King's nearest friends have now fallen from him since the Dauphin has accepted the invitation of the Barons hitherward. The Earls of Salisbury, Arundel, Warren, Oxford, and the younger Mareschal—all have now utterly deserted his cause. Nay, more; I hear that the King's foreign troops which he levied in Flanders, and other French provinces, have refused to strike a blow in his favour. They decline serving against Lewis, the heir of their monarchy. The Gascons and Poitevins alone of all his mercenaries adhere to him."

"I care not," replied Hubert, "though all the kingdom yield to this paltry Dauphin; though every man, woman, and child throughout the realm bow the knee to the foreigner, and throw up their caps, and proclaim him King of England; yet I alone—alone amidst

ins of this keep, will die fighting against
reign yoke."

here spoke a true-born Englishman,"
med Gondibert, gazing with pleasure at
pressive features of Hubert. "I know
mesty, my worthy friend, and echo thy
. May the foul fiend light upon these
, for the land is altogether devoured by
y Italian priests, and black-muzzled
man, and greedy knaves from every
spot of the earth, I think. Ah! and
comes another grasping swarm to feed
what the others have left. May the sands
suck up their ships to the topmast ere
each our shores!"

patriot feelings of the Chamberlain and
nd found an answering chord in each
of that brave garrison.

n tower and turret, and through every
ole, embrasure, and arrow-slit of that
ng fortress and its circling walls, they
lared over the dizzy height upon the
ing sails; and as evening approached,
ie huge bottoms passed with their gor-
sails and silken streamers, displaying the

arms of France and the devices of her various
 allies. The whole gathering gave one hearty and
 unanimous shout, which was carried by the
 wind far and wide. It was not the cheer of
 joy or glad shout as is sent forth upon recog-
 nition of friends and allies, but it was one of
 those unbroken shouts of mingled hatred,
 vengeance, and defiance peculiar to the proud
 sons of England in sight of the foe and the
 danger almost within reach and ere long,
 destined to be before them—face to face, and
 sword point to point.

"I see their means now," observed Hubert,
 as he stood somewhat apart, attended by three
 of his principal followers. "They
 mean for the shores of Thanet, where the first
 part of the expedition is already landed.
 They will swing upon Sandwich this night.
 By Heaven, I will yet throw in a few of my
 men there, or all the Cinque-porters in this
 extremity, or they must yield without a blow,
 ere Sandwich can reach them. Nay, I
 will myself be in their town this night, to
 strike with them."

"By my day," said Gondibert, "sith it be

will e'en ride me in your company,
t; for, an' I can do so, I must reach
elyonne ere many hours older."

oth the good Knight of Daundelyonne
old his own, and keep his tower stand-
midst this scene of confusion?" inquired

doth," answered the Jester; "but in a
f marvellous distemperature. And that
s me I have a hundred businesses on

CHAPTER XV.

FRENCH AND JEALOUSY.

Not in the legions
 If north hell will come a devil more damn'd
 In this than Macbeth.

SHAKESPEARE.

WE must now again introduce our readers
 with the rivers of Daundelyonne.

The ruthless hand of war, which had again
 and again swept over the whole coast of Kent
 had not spared the dwellings and fortresses
 scattered over the fertile isle of Thanet, most
 of which reduced to the condition of smoking
 ruins displayed in their vicinity all the horrors
 and atrocities recently committed both by
 native and foreign foes.

The hamlets of Ramsgate, Margate, St
 Laurence, Sarr, Birchington, Sturry, and St
 Nicholas were ravaged, burnt, and destroyed;
 Daundelyonne, and its neighbouring strong-
 hold of Margate, owing to the obstinate

four of their owners, alone remaining un-
bowed.

Sir Gilbert, who, on his being rescued from ignominious death by the Outlaw of Poitou, and subsequently conveyed to one of the secret haunts of the band, had, with his prisoner, succeeded in escaping to England; and, living at Daundelyonne, had there shut himself up within the protecting circle of his own walls.

Here he had remained in a state of strict seclusion, his gates rammed up against all dangers, inwardly chafing under the insult he had received at the hands of the King and his armidons.

True to his word, the Earl of Salisbury, on his return to England, had safely conveyed the daughter of his friend to her home, and Sir Gilbert had the satisfaction of receiving his daughter, after all her trials, unscathed. But his mighty spirit panted for revenge against those who had offered him so deadly an affront, both in his own and the person of his child. Towards the King, his anger was mixed up with so large a share of contempt, that he

despised him too much to care about his ungrateful and unscrupulous conduct. Against the villains Mauluc, and De Brabant, however, he vowed a deep and lasting hatred, and resolved to bring them to a heavy reckoning at the first favourable opportunity.

Acting under this feeling and resolve, after he had seen to the safety of his stronghold, drawn together all the retainers he could muster, and placed his towers in the best possible state of defence, he immediately recrossed the seas to France, and, in expectation of finding Sir Rauol de Brabant in his Chateau of Boislenoir, made for that fortress with all speed.

It was evening when he arrived, like some errant knight, alone and armed in proof, in the vicinity of his enemy's domain; but on seeking the chateau, where his daughter had spent so many dreary hours of captivity, he found only a blackened shell, which plainly hinted the tale of the issue of the night adventure of which we have already described the commencement.

Inquiry served to satisfy him that his

emy was, for the time, removed from his
enging arm; and from one or two peasants,
ho dwelt in the immediate neighbourhood of
e ruin, he learned the details of that eventful
ght.

Sir Raoul, it appeared, had been captured
fter the escape of Bertha and Gondibert, and
is followers either cut down or dispersed by
e King's guard. John had then held a
runken revel with his friend Mauluc, and the
oopers he had brought with him, until dawn;
nd although greatly disappointed and enraged
t the flight of Bertha, he had managed to
njoy the bridal feast which the Brabançon
ad prepared for himself and party.

The next morning, after instituting a search
rough the immediate neighbourhood of the
ateau, the King had ordered it to be fired,
ad had then taken his departure, carrying the
ercenary along with him.

Whether or not the King had really carried
t his eccentric designs of marrying the Bra-
ançon to his unfortunate domestic, Sir Gilbert
uld not ascertain. But he learned that the
ight had been treated with sufficient igno-

He soon
became ac-
quainted his
trusting to
ought the
able to meet

On his ar-
rive King at
wind to enter
a second time
will doubtless
realize that, I
designs of John
his abduction &
come within ti
by awakening t

feel the effects of its severity. Accordingly, the unlucky knight was now the solitary captive of a deeper dungeon than that which the unhappy Arthur had tenanted.

That this imprisonment was but a short prelude to the grave, the wretched captive could scarce doubt, knowing so well as he did the unforgiving and cruel nature of his late employer; and yet he was never fated to learn the real offence for which he was destined to suffer, namely, his supposed intimacy with the fair Isabella of Angoulême.

Indeed, had it not been for this jealous supposition on the part of John, it is not improbable that, by reason of his unscrupulous conscience, and the services he might yet have been called upon to perform, the King would have restored him to favour.

As it was, the deep revenge of John conceived a mode of punishment for the offending knight, which he thought would strike terror to the heart of the lovely Isabella, and scare her from any future indiscretions.

Were it not that the reality even transcends that which we are about to relate, in regard to

~~this~~ diabolical project, we should hesitate to tell it. But as truth is said to be stranger than fiction, so did the reality of John's revenge even exceed the version we are about to give.

It was on the night previous to the day in which he secretly embarked and stole away from the shores of France, that John put his diabolical project into execution.

The lovely Isabella, who had been present at the brilliant assembly given by John on the eve of his departure, unaware of his intention of embarking on the following day, had early retired to her apartments in the castle. She was on this evening suffering from illness, and consequent depression of spirits. John had, for the first time, possessed her with his suggestion of her fidelity, and, to her surprise and indignation, mentioned the loathsome Brabantine as the object of her passion.

This had led to a serious altercation between the royal pair; and Isabella, giving vent to her indignation at so gross a charge, openly expressed her grief and remorse at having deserted her noble lover, the Count de la Marche,

or so vile a husband as John had proved himself.

The rage of the King upon this rejoinder knew no bounds; and on leaving the Queen in order to vent his feelings upon something within reach, he immediately ordered the Brabançon knight to be strangled in his dungeon. The execution was performed with the strictest secrecy by De Bossu and his assistants, and took place just before the assembly. During the dance, and whilst the softest strain of music floated through the perfumed chambers of the castle, John took an opportunity of whispering in the ear of Isabella the fate of his prisoner.

Isabella immediately retired to her chamber, where she sat brooding over the dismal thoughts her quarrel with the King, and his unworthy suspicions gave rise to. Some sparks of pity for the Brabançon, of whose atrocious character she was unaware, pervading her breast, and mingling with her grief at her own unhappy lot.

On seeking her couch, the depression of her

spirits amounted almost to indisposition. She had dismissed her attendants for the night, and as she lay, unable to close her eyes, a secret fear and horror of she knew not what, so entirely pervaded her, that she frequently started up in alarm. If, at times, and during the earlier part of the night, she slept at all, it was only by fits and snatches, and as the night-lamp shed its gloomy light through the apartment, her imagination conjured up all sorts of hideous shapes and figures gliding about her couch. At length unable to bear the intensity of her nervous sufferings, she arose from her couch, and summoned her principal attendant, to try and chase these phantasies from her mind.

"I pray you, good Giselle," said Isabella, "take your lute, and strike a few chords. My mind is heavy to-night. I cannot sleep, or reason myself into calmness."

"Your Highness hath allowed the King's unworthy conduct to weigh upon your spirits," remarked the confidante. "Trust me, I would not permit even a royal husband so to disturb the equanimity of my mind."

"Nay, good Giselle," returned Isabella; "'tis not altogether the base conduct of the King that so much troubles me. There is a secret fear,—an awe and apprehension of something I cannot describe, which haunts my mind this night. The sudden execution of the Knight of Brabant, so undeservedly punished on my account, weighs upon my spirits. There is a feeling of some present horror pervading the very atmosphere of this chamber;—a savour of death in it, which I cannot endure. The very arras and hangings have a funereal look. Pr'ythee, trim the lamp, Giselle, and draw back those sombre curtains from before the window; mine eyes, the whole of this night, have been rivetted upon them, as if some terrible object were there concealed."

The attendant rose to obey the injunction of her royal mistress; but as she approached the dark curtain of the window she stopped, and turned pale. Could it be possible that the omens of her royal mistress had affected her own mind, or was it a reality she saw before her? As the breaking dawn was just appear-

through the heavy hangings, a bulky form seemed to be suspended behind their folds. To dispel the illusion, if indeed it were one, Isabella rushed to the window, and threw aside the curtain. "Oh horror!"

No sooner had she done so, than uttering a piercing shriek, she rushed back to the Queen, and throwing herself upon the couch beside her, gazed. Isabella cast one look towards the ghastly object which met her eyes, and was immediately referred to the same situation.

Fastened by the neck to the topmost bars of the window, and within the very apartment, hung the body of the Brabançon Knight, a ghastly and galling memorial of the royal wrath—thus having caused him to be suspended in such situation, so that when morning dawned Isabella might behold, as it were, set in a frame before her eyes, the dead body of her supposed gallant.

It was some time ere the Queen recovered from the shock caused by this hideous sight. Her attendant was the first to regain her scared

uses, when she hurried from the chamber, and caused her royal mistress to be immediately removed to another apartment.

Meanwhile, John, hugging himself in the successful issue of his ghastly joke, sailed on that morning for England, leaving directions to Isabella and the attendants of the Court to follow.

Rumours of the above transaction reached Sir Gilbert immediately on his arrival at the east; and the Brabançon being thus beyond his vengeance, he returned to his home, inwardly vowing at a fitting opportunity to seek satisfaction at the hands of Mauluc, for his share in the transaction by which he felt himself aggrieved. As, however, that Knight was now in greater favour than ever with the King, whilst he himself durst not openly appear at court, Sir Gilbert resolved, amidst the turmoils which now pervaded the kingdom from one end to the other, to bide his time.

Whilst matters had remained in this state with the good Knight of Daundelyonne, the miserable situation of his native land, and the

accumulated horrors around his own immediate domain, preyed upon his spirits and affected his health. Every armed post, and every rumour, since he had returned and shut himself up within the circle of his old faced walls, brought intelligence of a dire and ominous character: till at length he could have said,—

“O nation, miserable,
With an untitled tyrant, bloody-sceptred,
When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again!”

Not only in Kent, but in every county in England were to be seen the miserable effects of misrule. A horde of barbarous mercenaries incited by a cruel and enraged prince, were let loose against the estates, tenants, manors, castles, and parks of the nobles of the land; spreading contention and devastation from one end of the kingdom to the other. Hamlets and castles were alike reduced to ashes, whilst the cries and shrieks of the wretched inmates, under the tortures and atrocities of the enraged and brutal soldiery, filled the air.

Reprisals no less savage and cruel had been committed by the followers of the injured Barons upon those still adhering to the party of the King, whilst John himself, marching through the whole extent of England from Dover to Berwick, had wasted the country on either hand, considering every state, not immediately belonging to himself, the object of military execution.

Of too noble a nature to let his own private wrongs influence him, Sir Gilbert resolved not to join the forces of the discontented Barons. The idea of a foreign Prince ruling in his native land was hateful to him, whilst the conduct of the King made it equally impossible to him to lift a weapon in the royal cause. Under these circumstances he had stood firmly at bay, and had hitherto succeeded in beating off whatever parties had assailed him in his retirement.

Still, although hitherto he had managed to hold his own, it was plain to the good Knight that the evil day must come at last, and, as he looked amongst the friends and retainers in his

own halls, whichever way he looked, ruin, disgrace, and misery seemed to stare him in the face. At length the times' abuse, and his own particular griefs, so preyed upon his spirits that the mind of the old Knight became quite unhinged, and he would stalk about all day long without speaking to or noticing those around. It was in vain that the tender solicitude of his daughter sought to dispel the melancholy which weighed upon her father's spirit. It was in vain that his trusty friend Gondibert sought to reason with his griefs, and rouse him to action, explaining the danger of his longer remaining at his home under the present state of affairs.

"The grief that will not speak,
Whispers the o'erfraught heart, and bids it break."

And as the old Knight turned his eye upon his child, and then gazed vacantly upon his friend, it was plain that, for the present, his reason was unsettled. Noblest minds, 'tis said, sink soonest into ruin, and the monk, who officiated as leech to the castle, prognosticated that Sir

Hubert would either sink under the pressure of his grief or become insane, unless he could be aroused to action. When, therefore, the Knight had anything like a lucid interval, Gondibert still attempted to get him to lead his retainers forth and quit the shelter of his towers. His object was to persuade him to throw himself and his forces into the Cinqueport of Sandwich, or join Hubert de Burgh at Dover, where Gondibert wisely thought his family would be in greater safety and his people of more use under the threatened invasion, than thus cooped up in his own petty fortress. It was all, however, vain. To the suggestions of Gondibert, the Knight inquired of whom or what he was to fight: one side he said was as bad as the other; either being but a losing game. Let every man stand firmly in his own ramparts. He was enough of a sailor, he said, to know that in a storm the best plan was to abide by the hull, and as to fighting in the cause of the King—that here he panted. His banner was unfurled on his own Keep,

and he would die amidst the general ruin.
No man could trust his brother in such a
hurly, and happy were they who could stand
out whilst the tempest raged over the land.

CHAPTER XVI.

DAUNDELYONNE.

Shall we, upon the footing of our land,
Send fair-play orders, and make compromise,
Insinuation, parley, and base truce
To arms invasive? Shall a beardless boy—
A cocker'd, silken wanton, brave our fields,
And flesh his spirits in a warlike soil,
Mocking the air with colours idly spread,
And find no check? Let us, my liege, to arms.

SHAKESPEARE.

ONE evening during this state of affairs at Daundelyonne, as the setting sun gleamed on the mirrored wave and gilded tower, and yet of the castle, two ladies occupied an apartment whose windows looked out upon a small strip of headland between that fort and the sea. It would, perhaps, be extremely difficult to our readers to imagine two girls so lovely, and yet so different in their degree of beauty, as the two inhabitants of this chamber.

The one reclining upon a rude oaken couch

or settle, which had been placed near the window, in order that its occupant might enjoy the grateful freshes from the sea, seemed formed for empire and command, so regal was her look.

Like Juliet, she leant her cheek upon her hand, and gazed intently upon the glorious orb as it sank to rest in the wave. The other, no less lovely, but of a smaller and more delicate mould, as she stood beside the open window, sought by her lively conversation to amuse the settled gloom and melancholy which seemed to hang like a dark cloud upon the spirits of her companion. It seemed, indeed, that nothing like care could sit upon the lovely brow of that girl: she appeared born to inhabit some bright world, the creation of a poet's dream.

- Her's was a form of life and light,
Which seen, became a part of sight."

Our readers will perhaps by this time have surmised that we have introduced them into the same apartment, which, in the commencement of our story, we described as occupied by the fair Bertha Daundelyonne; the present occupants being that lady and her sometime page.

Such is the case; and in the few short years which have flown with swift passage over the events of our story, there was a trifling change in the outward appearance of the pair.

The lady Bertha, who was now about five and twenty years of age, had become a full-grown beauty, whilst the stripling page, whose sex our readers have long known, now shone for the first time in female attire, and having also reached the prime of womanhood, equalled her companion in loveliness. As Bertha watched the sun's decline, the soft influence of the hour and scene stole over her; and her thoughts dwelt with increasing keenness upon the change which had taken place in her own prospects and fortunes. That time, which she had left with the hopes and aspirations incident to youth and high station, she had now revisited, apparently to behold it poised to devastation and ruin. The evening breeze still swept over the grassy down, sweetly as of yore. The setting sun sank majestic in the glassy wave, even as when in happier hours she had looked from that window at all the pride of conscious power and beauty.

The hem-dion still fluttered over tower and
 seen it the impress which owned her sire as lord,
 and that witnessed all his feudal power. And
 yet still it seemed to her that all was darkened
 now in naked waste. The charm of life had
 fled: and hence her was a dreary waste of
 years.

As her more lively companion marked the
 sad mood upon Bertha's spirit, she took
 her lute, and with its tones swept along the
 wax-lined chamber, with a voice whose
 melody sent a thrill through the hearer's
 frame. she sang the following ditty:—

He comes no more! *

The flowers are blooming,
 Their fragrant breath, the bower perfuming,
 Even as of yore.

But he who used to gaze enchanted
 Tame me, when those flowers were planted—

He comes no more—

No more!

He comes no more;
 With voice of power,
 Still thrills my late at evening hour,
 Sweet as before.

Alas! 'tis now the mournful token
 Of plighted faith, for ever broken—

He comes no more—

No more!

* Old Song.

The song ceased, and Bertha took the hand that sweet syren in her own. "And thou, thou loveliest, best, but most wayward of companions," she said, "thou, too, must needs aspire against thy poor friend, to put a cheat on her. Those tones again remind me of happier days,—days dearly cherished, although but as a dream,—when you first sought these hills. But I marvel, Adela," she continued, after a pause, "that thou canst still wear so light a heart, when, like myself, thou wilt perhaps fall a victim to these dreadful diseases."

"I have too long led a life of danger and adventure, dearest Lady," returned Adela, "to feel so much uneasiness as you doubtless experience. My education has made it easy for me, like the soldier, to cast away care; but, except for the sake of those I love, I have little fear. Sorrow, Lady, is a bad-companion, believe me, for those who have little beside their own good spirits to pass them through the world."

"Nay, but I have some cause of complaint against thee," remarked Bertha, "for the

secret you so long thought proper to practise upon me. I, at least, might have been permitted to learn the secret of your sex somewhat sooner."

"For that, I must ever crave pardon," returned Adela. "But, indeed, the desire of discovering my parentage, and the facility such a disguise gave me, added to the danger to which one so unprotected was exposed must be my excuse. Besides, Gondibert, who had obtained some clue to my history, and under whose watchful eye I had for some time been preserved from harm, insisted upon my keeping my own secret, whilst taking service at Daumeryonne."

"The story of your wandering life," said Bertha. "you have already related to me, but only by parcels, and at intervals, have you told the strange events which made you an alien from your home and friends."

"Tis briefly told," returned Adela; "and, as I have since learned it from my father's lips, I will relate it to you. I am, like yourself, on one side, of Saxon parentage, and Kent is also the place of my birth. Northward

on the town of Rochester, lies the small hamlet of Eddington. As its name implies, this place was formerly part of the possession of Edda, a Saxon chief, of considerable importance. 'Tun,' I need scarce remind you, meaning a town, or territory inclosed or edged in with a stone fence; whilst Edda is the name of my paternal ancestor, who fought against Duke William at Hastings. Like Mereward, the chieftain Edda remained a rankling thorn in the Conqueror's side, after Hastings was won. Indeed, he was one of the few Saxon chieftains who escaped utter degradation and ruin.

"It is almost unnecessary that I should relate to you the persecutions and horrible cruelties so often practised by the Conqueror on the unhappy Saxons at that period. Suffice it, although from the fierce and unconquerable nature of my father's tribe, they escaped complete subjection, the fierce Edda his share of trials. During the frequent hostile expeditions of the Normans into our whole territory, their soldiery practised unnumbered cruelties upon such as they subdued.

at the Medway, and
women and children
lost. I will not, I
suffering half the a
Normans upon our
suffering which I fe
owing to the obs
have Edda, the
usury to subdue ou
possession for many
in brief my gran
and chieftain. Edda,
ish towards the opp
sum of his stronghol
keep himself and hi
course with them.
my own father. He

who never knew of the alliance, but died urging his son to hold for ever cherished in his breast, the blackest hatred and animosity against the whole Norman race.

"It would have been well, perhaps, if my father had followed the old Chieftain's instructions; but, unluckily, his wife's connexions led him into constant communication with those in power, and he became a friend and follower of the heroic Richard in his early youth. Whilst the lion-hearted King was contemplating his expedition to the Holy Land, my sire and his lovely wife were in attendance on him at Rochester Castle; and in an assemblage of the knightly and noble within those walls, Prince John saw and became deeply enamoured of my mother. It was not, however, till after the departure of Richard for Palestine that the Prince made any effort to get the wife of his brother's friend into his power; but soon after that event he arranged a hunting expedition in the neighbourhood, and contrived to make himself guest in the Saxon fortress of Eddington.

"It was predicted by many of the grim and

gaunt-looking old followers of my father that the entrance of the reckless Prince and his gay Norman followers within the fort would prove fatal to our house; and many were there that day who would gladly have plunged their weapons into the heart of the Prince as he feasted in that low-roofed hall. The result did not falsify their predictions, since the profligate John could not restrain himself from insulting my mother by his advances, even before the face of his entertainers.

- Strong with the insult, the fierce blood of the Saxon was aroused, and Wolstane expelled the royal profligate and his followers with ignominy from his doors. After the Norman yoke had become firmly fixed upon the country, it was not often that the conquered race durst venture to repel insult and injury, and accordingly my sire and his family anticipated the direst vengeance of the Prince.

- They were not deceived. Prince John, although he delayed his vengeance for some time, conceived a project by which he hoped to wreak a terrible revenge. He even sup-

pressed the evil feelings of his heart for three years, at the end of which period Richard departed on the first crusade to Palestine; and immediately after that event had taken place, my father began to feel the effects of the anger which, for so long a time, had been smouldering in John's bosom.

"He accused my father of treasonable practices, and demanded his two children, twins of three years of age, to be given up to him as hostages for the security of his allegiance. My father refused to part with his children, and dreading the result, placed them in concealment with a dear and trusty friend, a Saxon of high descent, but whose family had been nearly extirpated, and himself driven to concealment in the gloomy woods and fastnesses of Offham, once part of the possessions of Offa, King of Mercia. In this seclusion, my parent thought his children would be in safety till he could succeed in leaving the kingdom with them. Such, however, was not to be the case. Nothing could escape the sharp revenge of Prince John, or the vigilance of his emissaries. They managed to ferret

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ing, and desola-
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whilst my father
to his friend.

- That friend
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Grief for the loss
to my father's ang-
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again to see his ho

ver the habitable world in his search. For any years, however, his labour was unsuccessful. At length, he thought he had obtained clue to the existence of one of them, and timately traced myself into this neighbourhood, where he rescued me from death within the walls of Salmstone. My brother he also discovered in Normandy, but he has since lost sight of him. My father, meantime, in order to escape death, fled beyond the seas; and with a price set upon his head, and branded as a traitor, became chief of a band of outlaws festing the woods of Poicteau. Such, Lady, is the sad tale. My own subsequent adventures I have possessed you with."

"And your mother?" inquired Bertha; though I need scarcely pain you by asking after her fate."

"She died in Ireland," replied Adela, "where John had taken her, and long kept her in captivity. She was, I fear, starved to death in the castle of Limerick."

"It was a sad fate," said Bertha, "but one, I fear, not uncommon in these dreadful times."

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father, you say,

large he joined William d'Albiny at Roches-
ter, and seized upon his own domain of
Meddington."

Whilst the two ladies thus held converse in
Bertha's apartment, the old Knight, with his
retainers and friends around him, sat in the
hall of the building. Gondibert, who, under
existing circumstances, had taken upon himself
the direction of the whole household, was at
the moment absent, and the little fortress, now
completely filled with retainers and men-at-
arms, were drawn together by the danger of
the times and their love of the chief who had
so long held sway over the neighbourhood.

As the old Knight sat on the raised dais at
the end of his hall, his eye looked down upon
the dark mass of iron men. Many at the lower
end of the hall, with their heads upon their
folded arms, slumbered upon the oaken board.
Others, crowded around the ample hearth, dis-
missed the reports and rumours constantly
coming; whilst others again, excited and un-
easy, paced up and down the apartment,
without the hall, too, every part of the build-



ouse contained its missile ready to be launched upon the new-comers, who were quickly put to their answer.

"From whence, and of what party?" inquired the Warden from above.

"Of the party of all true English hearts," replied the leader. "For England and King John."

"We admit none within the castle," said the Warden. "We hold it for ourselves, against all comers. Draw off, lest we rain a shower of arrows upon your crests."

"I would see the Knight of Daundelyonne," returned the leader of the party, "instantly: without one moment's delay."

"It may not be," returned the Warden, "the knight is sick; you cannot gain speech of him."

"Nevertheless, if he be in life he will see me," rejoined the other. "My party is but small, and you have nothing to fear in admitting me. Deliver this sealed brief without delay."

The packet was immediately delivered into the Knight's hands. He opened it mechani-

cally, but was there no speculation in his eyes as he ran over its contents. Bertha, who had descended on hearing the trumpet, took it from him.

"'Tis a full pardon for my father from the King," she said, "and an order for him instantly to repair with all his forces to Sandwich. The bearer," continued Bertha, after a moment's consideration, "is one against whom no gates should be closed, when he comes the messenger of peace. He is welcome, dearly welcome to Daundelyonne. Admit him, Sirs, without delay."

In a few moments, a knight, accompanied by about half-a-dozen followers, entered the hall. The new comer was a remarkable figure of a man; his proportions were gigantic, and yet, so symmetrically was he formed, that his great height was not at first so apparent. Every muscle of his powerful limbs was developed beneath his chain-harness as if cast in iron. His erect and towering form, and majestic carriage, riveted each eye as he walked through the apartment. The arms he carried were of the most ponderous description: the

ield, itself, which hung at his back, seemed a
ad under which any common person would
ve sunk; and his huge two-handed sword,
hich was also suspended behind, the hilt
aching above the left shoulder and the point
uching the spur at his heel, seemed fitted for
giant only to wield. Whilst a whisper of
ognition of this magnificent looking form
ose amongst the crowd of men in the hall

strode directly up to Sir Gilbert, and
oked hard at him for a few moments. He
en turned to Bertha, as she stood beside
r father, and bowed, but as his eye caught
ht of the fair Adela, who stood somewhat
the back-ground, he started, and, imme-
tely advancing, he took her hand and carry-
it to his lips sank upon one knee.

The fair Adela smiled, as she returned the
ognition, and the Knight, turning, addressed
Gilbert Daundelyonne.

"You know me not, Sir Gilbert," he said;
ad, yet, methinks, Faulconbridge should not
altogether forgotten."

The name seemed to touch some chord which
erberated.

"Faulconbridge!" exclaimed Sir Gilbert, looking up, "who named Faulconbridge? Hath he not also fallen amidst the general ruin?"

"'Tis Faulconbridge himself," urged Bertha.

"Where?" inquired the Knight, gazing vacantly upon the dense crowd of men around, who looked with increasing interest upon the scene.

"Faulconbridge is too noble for such a world as this; what would he at Daundelyonne? He is dead."

"I come to summon thee in the name of John of England," said Faulconbridge; to ask for aid against this inglorious league. We are poor in friends. My power, albeit it is but small, is moving upon Sandwich, and I have ridden forward to request you to join me with all speed. The Dauphin is already on the seas, or perhaps by this time landed."

"Ah, the Dauphin!" muttered Sir Gilbert; "Is it so? But, 'tis no matter. I draw no sword in the cause of John. He is an object of the blackest hatred of mankind."

"I may not listen to this," said Faulconbridge. "Thou wilt not tamely sit with thy

followers around thee, Sir Gilbert Daundelyonne, and suffer a beardless Frenchman to invade the shores of your island. Thou wilt not remain in his petty fortress 'till this scum of France swarm upon your hold, give your towers to the flames, and your people to the edge of the sword. Fie upon thee, Sir Knight! Let your trumpet sound out, and lead these brave fellows against the foe. Lady," he continued, turning to Bertha, "we must either persuade your father to leave this place, or forcibly remove him."


The old Knight seemed to consider the words of the son of Cœur-de-lion. He was aroused, and appeared to awaken, as from a deep sleep. Starting to his feet, he placed both hands upon the brawny shoulders of Faulconbridge, perusing his features intently for some moments, as he held him at arm's length.

"How say you?" he said, after a pause. "Have the French indeed landed upon the shores of Kent?"

"Such is, I fear, by this time the case," returned Faulconbridge. "For as I journeyed hitherward, I was met by twenty tired posts between this place and Rochester, urging me



ome, Sir Richard," he said, "methinks,



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former party.

In those days of
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and the open road

circumstance of the camp and the march. Their safety was, amidst the armed forces of their nearest and dearest friends; the very ornaments they wore were the heraldic devices which decked the arms and armour of their lovers and husbands. Even their sports and pastimes were held amongst all the bustle of the big war.

By this hasty movement, Faulconbridge thought at any rate to throw their small force into Sandwich, before the French landed. At the very moment, however, that Sir Gilbert gave his banner to the wind, and galloped with his party from beneath his own towers, the Dauphin was assailing the walls of the Cinque-port.

The pale moon poured a broad clear flood of brilliant light upon the Castle of Daundelyonne, as the forces filed out into the open space in front of the Barbican. They moved forwards through the dark belt of stunted oaks which grew about a couple of bow-shots from the fortress, and then were lost in the light white vapour which exhaled in the marshy grounds towards the flats, and deep silence, occasionally broken by the sighing of the night wind, reigned

THE BUREAU OF THE ARMY

THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PASSAGE OF THE FLATS.

Half my power, this night,
Passing these flats, were taken by the tide.

SHAKESPEARE.

MEANTIME, after leaving Daundelyonne, Sir Bert and his party dashed over the open marsh, and descending the rising ground, entered the skirts of the wood, which lay to the left of Minster; and passing through it, the flats were immediately before them. A single glance sufficed to show that not a moment was to be lost. The waters of the Great Ouse, at that period flowed sometimes nearly round the isle of Thanet, separating it from the main land of Kent, so that even small boats could sail across the broad estuary. At the present moment, as they looked over the marshy grounds, consisting of some four or five miles of marsh land, ere they could reach the

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"THERE IS GREAT DANGER
MOMENT "I NEVER BUT ONCE
WATERS WERE SO HIGH, AND
RIVER."

As the party stood up
HAD amidst the ripple of
which was clearly to be h

town is assailed," he said; "we must try the flats. 'Tis our only chance of reaching Sandwich this night. At any rate there is now no time for deliberation. Every moment lost is of consequence."

Whilst he spoke his eye rested uneasily upon the fair Adela, who with Bertha sat beside Sir Gilbert Daundelyonne, somewhat in front of the party; and the bitter thought intruded that he had suffered his private feelings to interfere with his duty. Was it really his friendship for the Knight which had led him out of the straight path that night, or was it a softer feeling towards that bright form which, like some goddess of the chase so gracefully occupied her saddle before him? Whilst he gazed upon Adela, the din of battle was again borne upon the blast. The exciting sounds recalled him to himself.

"I cannot advise you, Sir Gilbert," he hastily said, "to expose these ladies to the perils of yonder passage; but for myself, I must keep promise with yonder town, or perish in the waters."

So saying, Faulconbridge dashed the spurs

into his charger, and followed by his party galloped like lightning down the hill side.

"The banner of the Daundelyonne, when once unfurled, turns not for flood or fire," cried Sir Gilbert. "Forwards, gentlemen; we shall yet be in time to share in yonder fight."

To the majority of our readers the wild scenery of this part of Thanet is probably well known. Far away to the right, over the oozy reeky waste, on a small promontory, stands the ancient monastery and castle of Reculver, —the Regulbrium of the Romans,—and subsequently called Raculf-Cester by the Saxons; where in earlier times lay the first cohort of the Vetesians, under command of the Count of the Saxon shore. Somewhat nearer to Sandwich, and on a rising ground, are to be seen the massive walls of Richborough, the spot on which Cæsar landed his legions when he first invaded Britain; whilst on the left, far as the eye can reach, the wild waters of the open sea come dancing up to the very edge of the road the traveller passes.

During the rapid ride of the party, and ere they had halted upon the rising ground, as we

As we described, Adela had been conscious of the careful attention of one of the cavaliers, who had accompanied Faulconbridge to Daun-alyonne. He had placed himself beside her from the commencement of the start, and, like a careful esquire, rode close at her bridle-rein. When Faulconbridge dashed down the hill-side, during the short interval which elapsed ere Gilbert's party followed, this cavalier, instead of accompanying his own party, had still lingered beside her. And now again, when they gained the flats, he was close to her horse's head.

A perfect horsewoman, inured to the saddle most from her cradle, during her adventurous life, Adela on ordinary occasions would hardly have needed the assistance of so attentive an esquire. But during a hurried night ride in the midst of a troop of some two hundred heavily-armed horsemen, thundering ter-skelter over the uneven ground, such attention was by no means unwelcome. The slightest falter in her charger might make that form "pavement for the abject rear." The rapidity with which the tide rose over the low

on in high foaming waves, gradually extending and surging in eddies amongst the standing waters of the flats on the other side. The party seemed already hopelessly engulfed in the main of waters, which now flew and gambled in white frothy flakes up to their very horse-girths.

"Halt not now," said Sir Gilbert, as he came up. "To return is impossible; our only hope consists in getting through the lower part of the road before us. Advance your party in single files, Sir Richard, and let me pass to the front.

"There is a sharp turn here," he continued, to Faulconbridge, as he passed to the right. "I know it by the cross you see just before us."

As he spoke, Sir Gilbert passed rapidly to the front, with the rein of his daughter's palfrey in his grasp. The cavalier who led the steed of Adela immediately followed them, and the whole party safely passed the wooden cross which marked the spot at which the road diverged.

"There is yet another turn," said the Cavalier, who rode beside Adela, "and then we



slackened their pace to a slow trot, each man pushing on as he best might.

"The turning is close at hand," said the Cavalier to Faulconbridge. "If Sir Gilbert misses it, he will be swallowed up in the morass in an instant."

"How are we to distinguish it?" inquired Faulconbridge. "The mists roll past us so fast, I can scarce see ten yards to the front."

"'Tis a black crucifix," returned the Cavalier, "placed here by the monks of Minster as a guidepost, and must be on yonder side of the road."

"I see it now," said Faulconbridge; "but those in rear will never hit the exact place to turn."

The stranger answered not, but rising in his stirrups, dashed the end of his lance into the ground, leaving its fluttering banderole as a guide to their followers.

Adela glanced at it as he did so, and immediately saw the cognizance of the Folkstones displayed upon the silken streamer. She no longer doubted who was the careful attendant by her side. The next moment they entered

the deeper waters where the road descended, and the waves flowed over the cantles of their saddles.

The gallant Faulconbridge had reined up his steed close beside the lance, which his companion had left standing as a guide, and remained by it till every horseman had passed and taken the proper turn, before he himself followed.

The whole party were now at the most imminent point of their journey. Their pace was necessarily reduced to a walk ; and woe to the unlucky horseman who deviated from the sands of the causeway. Next to the roaring waters, the heavy armour of themselves and steeds were their worst enemies ; and those who missed footing, rolled over in an instant never to rise again. They looked as they struggled onwards, like Pharaoh's host amidst the waves of the Red Sea.

Struck with the horrors of such a situation, many would have turned and attempted to go back, but Faulconbridge, who kept in rear endeavouring to urge the stragglers, forbade the vain effort. His voice was heard amidst

the roar of increasing waters, vowing he would transfix with his lance whoever attempted to deviate from the line of march.

"Twas a singular and awful sight—that passage of the flats; the shoulders and helmets of the riders were all that were visible above the waves, whilst the snorting horses, their heads armed with iron frontlets, alone appearing, as the moon shone upon them, seemed like so many ghastly monsters of the deep struggling forwards. As Faulconbridge looked before him, he became aware that the party was diminishing; and the line becoming broken, and as horse after horse suddenly lost footing and with its rider disappeared, the very casualties immediately in his front warned him of the points to be avoided. High upon his magnificent charger, "barded from counter to tail," he well knew his dangerous situation.

"I am not much given to be holy," he said, as he dashed the spurs into his horse's sides and made him flounder on the right track, on beholding the man before him disappear. "I am not given to be holy, but by the bones of my Sire, so it please the Virgin, to allow of

my being knocked on the head upon dry land rather than smothered in these morasses, I now to find a chapel in yonder town, and maintain a priest to recite prayers for me every hour in the day."


Diminished to one-half their number, the party steadily held on. Sir Gilbert, who knew every point and bearing of the track, and whose eye marked every rise in the ground on either hand still uncovered by the waves, kept in front leading his daughter's horse, and those immediately behind now began to find they had passed the deepest part of the road.

The many casualties, however, which during the last few moments had taken place, had so much broken the line, that, in the thick mist, those in rear were separated and lost the benefit of the Knight's guidance. Adela, still carefully escorted by her devoted guide was now amidst those left behind. Her attendant, however, appeared to know precisely their exact position, and kept steadily on. Those in rear were now in the deepest part of the passage, and Paulconbridge at this moment came up beside them.

"By our Lady's grace," he said, "but I find myself almost left alone to struggle out of this unlucky scrape."

"A few minutes more," said the Cavalier, "and our efforts will be crowned with success; we shall gain the ascent in the road. Your horse," he continued, "is high in the waters, Sir Richard; push on, and should we fail, keep his head pointed straight upon yonder glare of light from the town. We have now shingles under our feet."

At this moment a huge wave came rolling on. It ascended to the chin of Faulconbridge, and almost threw his heavily-armed steed off its balance. With spurs and rein, however, he managed to recover him, and, as the waves slowly receded, he dashed forward and gained the higher ground. As he did so, he turned his head to look for Adela and her guide. The white mists still drove over the rolling waters, but not a living being was to be seen, and, as another large wave followed, he turned to endeavour to save himself. A few more plunges and Faulconbridge was safe beside Sir Gilbert and all that remained of the



wich, and between the
was a portion of a horse

Out of upwards of
who had made the
fifty had passed those
speedily formed, and
they dashed for the
glance, as they neared
of the devoted Cinq
it on the further side
blazing in awful majesty
filled with the brave
fiercely hand to hand
the myriads of assailants
them, whilst a terrific
voices filled the air.
French who occupied

rise; and the party, with Faulconbridge Sir Gilbert at their head, their lances red, and Bertha in the midst, passed through them like a thunderbolt. Faulconbridge and half a dozen of his followers then advanced, and cutting right and left, whilst Sir Gilbert summoned the town, the drawbridge lowered, the gates opened, and with a shout of welcome they were quickly admitted.

Landing unopposed at Stonar—already in interests—the Dauphin instantly marched over the small space intervening, and poured numerous troops headlong upon the girded and ramparted town of Sandwich.

True to their allegiance, the Cinque-port actionaries of the latter town had kept their gates closed against the confederates, and under promise from Faulconbridge, who was known to be advancing with rapid marches, had endeavoured to beat off the numerous foes by which they were surrounded. The gallant Robert had better enabled the Sandwich men to hold their own by dispatching to their aid the forces he could spare from Dover; and the rumour of the intended landing on that part of the coast being confirmed, had himself hastened from Dover to give them the benefit of his personal advice and assistance.

It was night when the Dauphin approached this Cinque-port, and as his legions neared the walls, not a sound was to be heard from the thousands of fierce watchers who lay in readiness in every foot of their circumference.

It was like the lull before the storm which

is to tear, rend, and ruin all within its reach. Suddenly, a rushing noise was to be distinguished in the direction of Stonar. It increased every moment, till the measured tread of multitudes was plainly to be heard, together with the ringing sound of armour.

The ominous rush was suddenly stilled. It commenced again, and seemed to divide in different directions. A dark mass was then seen, and again all was hushed as death. There was a fearful moment to those in expectation of the coming horrors of the night.

* Between the acting of a dreadful thing,
And the first motion, all the interim is
Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream."

The suspense, however, was short. The stillness again approached. It advanced swift and now shadowy figures are perceptible, bearing ladders, machines, and engines of assault.

Still the dark ramparts appear devoid of life, and the town remained noiseless as a grave, whilst the approaching mass threatened every side like a rolling cloud.

As the fierce watchers lie and mark every movement of this fearful cloud, it sudden-

assumes the appearance of an immense body of living men, who quicken their pace to a run, and throwing down the machines they had carried, dash at the town.

Immediately a dreadful shout arises from the walls, accompanied by the whistle of thousands of arrows, huge stones, cross-bow bolts, and other missiles, followed by shrieks and groans of agony. The garrison now springing up in every direction to receive their foes, the entire circumference of the ramparts is one gleam of hostile blades; which, raining with dreadful energy on every side, create a din as if ten thousand smiths were at work at the same moment.

Then might have been heard, within the walls, the wail of scared females, and the cry of children; the hurried shout of messenger and man-at-arms, and the rush of men from place to place, as different posts required assistance.

As the contest continues, the half-emptied streets become re-peopled by men staggering rounded from the ramparts, who throw themselves down to die amongst women huddled



Send off men to the Fisher's-Gate, Sir Mayor;
s hard pressed."

"Do the cravens cry out for help there?"
quired the Mayor, "when every part of my
vn is polluted alike by these beggarly French-
n."

"The walls on that side are low," replied
bert, "and the enemy hath crossed the
er in force. Our men have fallen like corn
ore the reaper."

"Our Lady be praised," said the Mayor,
e have beaten the frogs off our ramparts
a space, but I expect they will burst
us like a torrent again in a few mo-
nts."

The assailants, who had hardly expected so
gh a reception, had indeed retired for a
e, and sent to the Dauphin for a larger
ce. The Dauphin, who had not himself
n personally in the assault, was considerably
oyed at the repulse of his forces in their
t attack. He had expected to win the
n almost without stroke or wound. But
found in this first check the native obsti-



fought with desperation, overturning the ladders, burning the fascines, and hurling their enemies headlong from the walls.

At length, the Dauphin, enraged beyond measure, despatched messengers to his ships for some artificial fireworks, which Philip Augustus had brought with him on his return to France, from Acre ; and which he ordered to be thrown by a machine, into the town. The effect of this fire, which had been used by the Turks against the French crusaders, was dreadful. It had been described by the Crusaders as rushing through the air like a fiery dragon, giving such a light, that the whole army might see, as if in open day. Such, indeed, was the terror it had occasioned in the East, that Gautier de Criol, one of the French commanders, used to advise the army, when it was thrown, to prostrate themselves on the earth, and call for aid from God, who alone could protect them.

This dreadful combustible, which indeed was the Greek fire, with a "pernicious stench and vivid flame," carried dismay into the hearts of the besieged. Wherever it struck them, it

penetrated between the joints of their armour, and burning their bodies, put them to dreadful agony, so that like raging madmen, they pressed themselves headlong into the moat, or threw themselves down, and died, writhing in agonies on the walls.

By this time the Kentish archers drew their bowstrings to their ears, and rained such flights of arrows, that the French bowed their heads to the shower. The enemy succeeded in setting fire to the Carmelite Monastery, and the Hospital of St. John, from whence the flames quickly extended to the other edifices in the town.

Still the defenders fought their ground, inch by inch. They were not to be subdued by any fire but death: for well did they know that they fought for all—for home and hearth, wife and child: did every husband and father stand in ground.

The Lord Mayor was on that side of the river which the Dauphin himself assailed. He saw that all was lost there; and whilst Hubert held the torrent in check for a brief space, he retired, and sending all the reinforce-

ents he could spare, to check the rush, he
ew ship-cables, chains, and even huge bars
iron across the streets. By this means, he
ll preserved half his town, and effectually
ecking the enemy, kept them among the
rning houses.

This was a state of things which could not
t. The defenders, choked up in their streets,
re like the scorpion, "girt by fire;" and the
est confusion succeeded to the order with
ich they had hitherto fought. Foot by foot,
l' house by house, the assailants were obliged
gain their way, whilst the Dauphin himself,
o had ordered part of the walls to be beaten
wn, attended by a large body of knights,
l following the progress of his troops, made
way into the fish market.

The portion of the town in possession of the
emy was now on fire in several different
ces, and still the enemy kept pouring in as
etermined to sweep everything before them,
d bursting the barriers which had been drawn
ross the streets, gained ground in every part.
this moment, Faulconbridge arrived, and
th Sir Gilbert Daundelyonne, and their fol-



n a surcoat of blue silk, emblazoned with silver,—his horse-trappings equally gorgeous, and sweeping the ground,—was. at this moment, sitting listlessly in his saddle, and surrounded by his Knights, in a lisping, affected lrawl, was issuing out orders that no quarter should be given. He was greatly angered at the obstinacy of the Sandwich folks, who took so large a share of beating, and yet still refused to be beaten.

“Mon Dieu!” he said, “but those Cinque-port dogs are as ugly as their town. We break our teeth upon them, but cannot bite them through. Bring me no more reports, Messieurs; but burn them utterly out, and give their Cinque-port to the flames. Ah! ah! Brulez, tuez, detruiez! Mort de ma vie!” he continued, “nous ferions de bonnes affaires. Venez-ici, être le jouet, de la canaille de ce maudit Cinque-porte. No quarter, Messieurs! No quarter! They shall perish pour outrage.”

Whilst the Prince sat in the fish market, issuing out his orders amidst the blazing confusion, Faulconbridge was carrying ruin in his



front, and received the shock of the encounter. The gallantry of this cavalier saved Lewis, and enabled those around to recover from the surprise; and Faulconbridge, beaten off, and hemmed in by numbers, was on the point of being himself captured or killed.

At this moment, however, Sir Gilbert Dauneluyonne, who had placed his daughter in the strong dwelling-house of the Mayor, galloped to his aid, and, accompanied by about a dozen knights, rescued the brave Faulconbridge, and enabled him to retire. The Prince at the same time turning his steed, together with his retinue, retired to the walls.

This was almost the last expiring effort of the defenders to preserve the good old Cinque-port. They were fairly overborne and beaten, and the legions of the Dauphin pouring in on all sides, the game was won.

Then ensued a scene, such as we have neither the power nor the inclination fully to describe.

The valiant Cinque-porters everywhere died as they stood; beaten down like bullocks in the shambles, or burnt out in their dwellings.

that over it indeed she
conspired, winning the g
was the license at this
point by the foreign
license plates. Then i

"The latest model was, with

When indeed did man pay
in marriage bond.—

"Continued (1
On unspeakable con

In every part of the town
barren and butchery ensu
down mankind to utter de

the dead into which fugitives had crept, were torn open, and became scenes of terror and atrocity; till at length the blazing town falling alike upon victor and vanquished put an end to the horrors of the night,—

“And darkness was the burier of the dead.”

At the commencement of this scene of butchery, and after he had been rescued by Sir Gilbert Daundelyonne, the noble Faulconbridge galloping, like the avenger of the unhappy citizens, through the burning streets, endeavoured to cut a passage out of the town.

His ardour had again separated him from his party, who now had retired to the mayor's house, a strong moated building situated on the banks of the river, near the Canterbury gate.

Involved in the narrow streets, and alone amidst the blazing ruins of the part of the town he had reached, the gallant son of Cœur-de-lion seemed on the eve of falling a sacrifice to his rashness, when he beheld a horseman spurring towards him. He was about to



own's-folk, who had shut themselves up there, and were fighting it out to the last man. The two knights, therefore, spurring through the press, and riding down all immediately in their way, passed through the arch, and gained the open road.

The Mayor's house was the last place of strength that held out. Thither the chief magistrate, together with Sir Gilbert Daundelyonne and other fugitives had retired, and for some time succeeded in keeping their savage foes at bay.

At length this last resource was forced, and the defenders being pursued through every part of the building, were given to the edge of a sword. It was in this house that Bertha Daundelyonne was located. Her father had imagined it would be easy to remove her from the town from this spot, in the event of matters becoming desperate. He had, however, missed his opportunity, and now saw his daughter threatened with all the horrors of the night.

As the lower part of the building was forced, the defenders fought from room to room. The

Mayor, with his huge battle-axe in hand, was polled like an ox in his own hall, and fell covered with wounds. Sir Gilbert Daundelyonne, like the lion defending his young, long stood between his daughter and the crowd of ruffians who endeavoured to seize her, till at length he also was borne to the earth.

Whilst this scene was enacting, the Dauphin, attended by a brilliant assemblage of nobles, rode through the street in which the Mayor's house was situate, and took their way towards the gate-house at its extremity.

Glittering in golden trappings and gorgeous appointments, the gallant cortège formed a gay contrast to the ghastly and blackened crowd, now in all the freedom of unchecked riot, roaming through the town; and with all the hardihood of men whose avocation was war, they displayed the most perfect indifference to the dreadful scenes taking place in every foot of their progress. The cry of despair, the howl of agony, the deep groan, the dying execration, and the death-struggle were alike disregarded by that knightly throng; as, with lance erect and fluttering pennon, they rode

through the streets. Accompanying this party there was one knight whose bearing was remarkable even in the midst of the gallant warriors with whom he rode, his raised beaver displaying features so exquisitely formed, and a countenance whose expression was so truly noble, that, together with his graceful seat and gallant bearing, he seemed the prince of chivalry. He rode close beside the Dauphin, whom he had that day preserved from the sword of Faulconbridge.

As the gay party spurred their coursers past the house of the Mayor, they were stopped for a few minutes by the crowd of fierce assailants and plunderers making their way into the building. Amidst the dire confusion and hurly consequent upon the last struggle within the dwelling, a piercing shriek rang out.

To the ears of that knightly throng there was nothing uncommon in the sound, for cries of agony and distress were rife in every part of the devoted town, but upon the ear of the handsome cavalier who rode beside the Prince it seemed to produce a startling effect. Whe-

ther there was something in the accents that piercing cry which was familiar to his ears, it is impossible to say; but as another and another followed in quick succession, the sound proceeded from the side of the Prince, sprang from the crowd, and sprung from the saddle, hastily forced a passage through the building.

Following the sounds of strife, which seemed directed to the upper part of the stone staircase, he rushed up the stone staircase, entered an apartment from whence the cry of distress proceeded, and beheld the fair Blanche at the mercy of the course of events now in undisputed possession of the castle.

The apartment was filled with men of various descriptions belonging to the infamy of the conqueror's power,—the rudest of the conquering force—the very cankers of the army, and a creature as the English lady, who in their grasp, had never before given place to those swarthy savages, already filled with blood, excitement, and fierce rage, and the rage which a few short moments

efore had been directed against the defenders of the house was now turned upon each other. A couple of bowmen, clad in half-armour, laid their horny gripe upon the unhappy Bertha on one side, whilst a black-browed Breton seized her in his rude grasp on the other. These in turn were torn away, and truck down by several common mercenaries, clad in heavy chain mail; and as more dark-muzzled Frenchmen crowded around to contend for the prize, she seemed on the eve of being torn to pieces in the struggle; whilst, to add to the terror of the scene, the torches which several of the assailants carried had set fire to the arras and hangings of the apartment.

The next moment the glittering blade of the Knight who had sprung to the rescue flashed amongst the torches borne by that unallotted crew. It descended right and left upon the heads of the men who had already made prize of Bertha, and were dragging her from the apartment.

Like lightning the new-comer seized upon her, threw her behind him, and his blade and arm were opposed to his numerous foes. The

snatched the dagger which hung close to his left hand, and, swift as a flash of lightning, smote him down. The blow, which was given with amazing strength and skill, took effect just where the hauberk joined the neck-piece of the helmet, and killed the burly Breton in an instant ; the hot blood pouring out like a fountain, as the Knight drew out his blade.

This, for the moment, again completely owed the assailants, and with a strength and activity which, in one so slightly and elegantly armed, seemed prodigious, the youth cut a passage through the swarthy crowd, before they could recover from their surprise at his temerity ; and, hurrying the lady along with him, gained the stairs. Hastily descending with her to the ground-floor of the building he reached the street, ere his opponents could arrest his career. The whole occurrence had taken so short a time to enact, that the Prince and his attendant cavaliers, who had been delayed by the assembled crowd, were still in the street when the young Knight emerged with his prize. To place her on horseback, and commend her to the charge of one of his companions, was but

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charge reined back hi
he said as he gazed
bewildered with affri
upon her steed. "but
forth an angel of light
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specimens of female ex
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three-parts fired, we w
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and may come to ha
Dauphin spurred his h
and taking her under
party pursued their wa

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ENCAMPMENT OF THE DAUPHIN.

This apish and unmannerly approach,
This harness'd masque, and unadorned revel,
This unhair'd sauciness and boyish troops.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE sun rose brightly on the morning which
showed the siege of Sandwich, and, as its
light disclosed the scene of devastation, a thin
white smoke and dancing heat, similar to that
which proceeds from a reeking lime-kiln, the
ruined walls of church, monastery, and tower,
standing here and there in the midst, were all
that remained of that once strong town. Sea-
ward, upon the hills of sand which tradition
still points out as the site of Cæsar's sea-camp,
were to be seen the hastily-pitched tents of the
Dauphin's power. Already, during the night,
the host of the hostile force had poured over the
surrounding neighbourhood like a scorching

pestilence, and plundering and burning farms, villages, and towns, rendered the fertile country, in their progress, one dreary and horrid scene of waste and desolation. And now, as trumpet and drum resounded over the grassy mounds upon which the camp was pitched, the main army was aroused to all the bustle of preparation. It would, doubtless, have much astonished the mind of a general of our own times to have beheld the dire confusion, and the prodigious crowd of attendants, camp-followers, and useless lumber attending a royal army in the middle ages; a scene of confusion and turmoil, which, however picturesque, amidst the splendour of feudal times, was so unlike the order, regularity, simplicity, and celerity with which the armies of modern days are conducted. As the sun shone out brightly upon the Dauphin's camp, and the forces were in all the bustle of preparation, in rear of the encampment were to be seen crowds of horse-boys, varlets, and attendants upon the numerous knights, running hither and thither, as if distracted. Horses, in gorgeous trappings, were being led forth and examined after their

Voyage, and the affray of the night before; and kicking, plunging, and running against each other, amidst oaths and execrations of their attendants, created a terrible scene of confusion. Carriages and wains for baggage were being extricated from the mass into which they had been jammed. Pack-horses, laden with chests, containing money, gold and plate, and even the gorgeous hangings and furniture of the tents, were being led forth; whilst players, priests, cooks, and confectioners, barber-monsters, parasites, timbrel players, wandering minstrels, musicians and dancers capering about, made such a din that it appeared as if the Dauphin meant to hold a continued revel, and dance a galliard from one end of the distracted kingdom to the other.

In front of the encampment hundreds of knights, esquires, and young nobles, emerging from their tents, held converse with pages, clerks, and officers, "all glittering in golden coats," like images; and in the space beyond that, and near the town of Stonar, were to be seen moving masses of heavily-armed horsemen, and large bodies of cross-bow men and

passed that Prince
nobles were in atten-
tion and make his
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dious and arms
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sion that in attend-
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* One, whom the
The spirit like one

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and, surrounded by sycophantic attendants, he generally had to gulp a decent portion of adulation during his morning meal.

"Morte de ma vie!" exclaimed the Count de Samblancy, "but your Highness did indeed surpass yourself last night. *Sacre bleu!* I think you must have slain a round dozen of those island carrion after we gained the walls."

"Did he draw his sword, think ye?" whispered the young Count de Chartres aside to Samblancy.

"Ah, by St. Denis!" said D'Argenteuil, "and what a glorious thought that was of sending for the Greek fire, in order to essay those hard-headed barbarians. *Mon Dieu!* 'twas a brilliant thought, and brilliantly it wrought upon them."

"Nay," said Samblancy, "commend me to the device of throwing into the town the carcasses of our slain steeds; that thought was worthy of immortal Cæsar."

"Holy Virgin!" said the Prince, "what would you have? these Cinque-port dogs rather raised my choler last night. Who would have supposed, *Monsiegnurs*, that so ugly a town would have cost us so many men and so much trouble?"

"*Sacre bleu !*" coincided the Count de Chartres. "your Highness speaks sooth. I was never more foully battered by canaille in my life than last night. Each low island caitiff doing duty on those ramparts was worth a knight of France."

"*Apropos.*" said the Dauphin, "we must make a visit to that fair excellence which the minstrel Clothaire delivered from the hands of the Philistines. I thought, at first, she was the daughter of one of the portly burghers of yonder sea-port, but it appears, from what I gathered last night, that she is of some condition and celebrated for her beauty in the Court of the usurping John. *Pardieu*, my lords, we must gladden the disconsolate virgin in her misfortunes by favourable notice. By the way, De Belleville, you will take order for her being properly accommodated, as I intend she shall accompany us in our march. Nay, I will confer a visit on her to-day, ere we set forth, and endeavour to comfort her distress."

"Your royal condescension will doubtless be highly appreciated by the lovely Englishwoman," said the Chamberlain bowing; "suffer

me to adjust your Highness's scarf. But, perhaps, I shall be pardoned if I surmise that you will find no distressed damsel in the heiress of Daundelyonne, for such I hear is her name. On the contrary, the handsome Clothaire, who so opportunely rescued her, hath an absolute sway in the breast of the fair lady. By Cupid! if I may so judge, they seem to have met before."

"And the service so readily rendered to herself," said Samblances, "hath since received addition by the restoration of her father, by this same dare-all, whom your Highness delighteth to honour."

"Peste!" exclaimed the Prince, "that is something unlucky. We could ourself have rather relished offering service to one so fair. We confess ourself to have been somewhat stricken with the lady last night, she seemed a perfect miracle of beauty in her terror and distress. Clothaire hath the luck of it. He enchains all hearts. By the way!" continued the Prince, who being now fully equipped, seated himself to finish his morning meal, whilst those in attendance remained standing

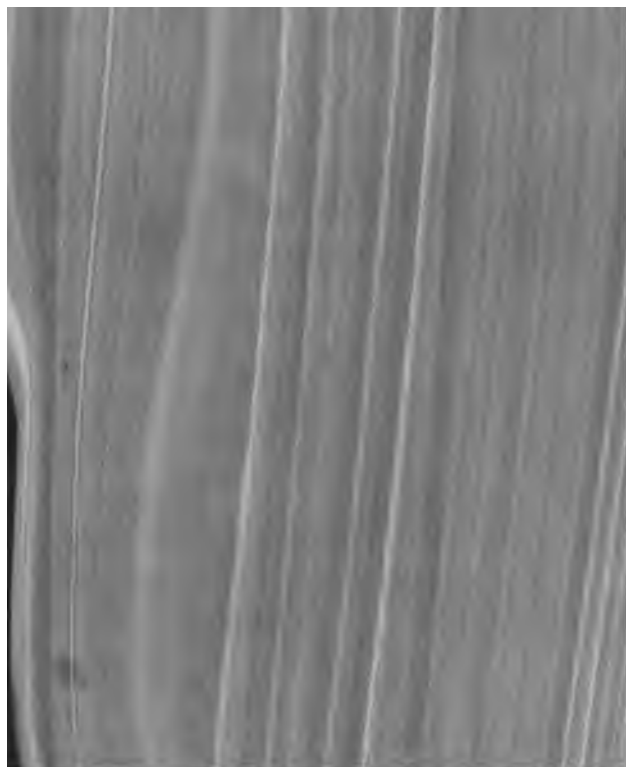
aloof. "By the way, Count, I believe I never related to you the history of this singular youth."

"Never," replied the Count de Chartres, who being aware that the Prince loved to hear himself talk, pretended the most profound attention, although in reality he marked scarce half that was said. "It hath been your Highness's pleasure to heap honours and rewards upon this English youth during the short time you have known him, but, save that he is of obscure or perhaps base birth, we have no knowledge of his story."

"Your Lordship will understand," observed the Dauphin, "that I by no means think he is English born: his manners are too good—decidedly French; and for his being of base birth, I would hardly advise any Knight present to utter so much in the presence of Clothaire. He is of unknown, but I should think of not unworthy lineage. He is a sort of waif or stray in the wide ocean of the world, having been by some means filched from his parents and sold to one Ragusine, a notorious pirate infesting the shores of an isle near this kingdom, L'Isle de —"

“The Isle of Wight, your Highness doubtless means,” said Aubert, Count of Franconia.

“The same,” said the Prince; “where it is reported this bad John,—whom, by God’s help,” continued the Prince, making the sign of the cross, “we mean to expel the land,—was wont to amuse himself by associating with these banditti, even accompanying them in their plundering expeditions round his own kingdom. ‘Diantre, quel sacré polisson!’ Thus nurtured in earliest infancy,” proceeded the Dauphin, resuming his story, “this Clothaire became subjected to all the cruelties and hardships incident to the life his savage comrades led. He was cradled, Messieurs, amidst scenes of fire and slaughter. Eh, bien! you see, what a dare-devil it is—how fierce in spirit and how rash when once aroused; and had he continued to live the life in which his infancy was passed, he would have doubtless become a fiend incarnate. At ten years old, however, he changed his mode of life. He resented a blow given him by the ruthless Ragusine, and drove a dagger to his heart one night whilst in the Gulf of Venice. For this, Monseigneurs, he



Eh, bien! To continue—becoming involved in some brawl amongst the citizens of this Stonar, Clothaire, to escape the consequence, turned soldier for the nonce, and accompanied the army of John from yonder Cinque-port which we had the satisfaction of burning last night.

“Such is the history of this youth, Monsiengneurs; there is yet something more to relate, but at the present moment I have talked enough. ‘Je suis bien fatigué de vous tous.’ Parblieu, I will mount and look out upon this swampy land of which we have just taken possession. This England famous for fogs and well-fed islanders. Sacrebleu! We shall burn up their fields for them in our progress, for they cannot fight—these English—unless their food is tied about their heads as the nose-bags of their steeds are fastened.”

“Before going forth,” said the Count de Chartres, “your Highness will, I presume, give audience to the English Barons who have accompanied us, and who having but now landed are impatiently awaiting your royal leisure.”

“The English Barons, Messieurs, will con-

the library and has a
shrine occupied a m
near the pavilion of t
had been conveyed by
rescue and escape from
who had done her th
also with some little
deed in extricating
from the midst of his
from the burning town
placed in safety in Sc
although he had been
numbers and covered
mortally hurt: and as
seen him properly bes
of the Benedictines in

ated ; and sent to demand the favour of an interview. One who had so opportunely come to the rescue, he naturally considered had something to make inquiry after the lady he had served.

To his surprise, however, he was given to understand by those in attendance upon the lady, that no person was to be admitted.

“ Have you this from the lady herself ? ” inquired the Knight.

“ Our orders are from the Prince,” returned the officer who was in waiting before the entrance.

“ Such orders cannot extend to me,” said the knight ; “ neither shall I obey them, unless coming from the mouth of the lady herself. And from before the entrance, sirrah.”

“ Your pardon, Sir Knight,” persisted the attendant, “ I may not disobey the royal order. I cannot permit you to pass.”

All further altercation was cut short by the valiant youth, who impatiently putting the attendant aside, the next moment stood in presence of her he had so recently saved from death, or haply, worse than death.



with all that it contains, is nothing—the covering sky is nothing. They neither see, care for, nor covet aught but the present hour; unhappily forgetting that they are subject, like more prosaic mortals, to all the reverses and accidents that flesh is heir to.

“And you really, then, suspected me of deceit and treachery, lady?” asked the youth. “O, how could the most consummate caitiff practise treachery towards one so lovely? Listen; and I will again more fully explain the cause of your poor servant’s seeming fault. After you had so unaccountably vanished, and I myself was imprisoned, I naturally attributed your abduction to the King. After my escape, a rencontre with some emissaries of Raoul of Brabant seemed to confirm that suspicion. Two felon knights, in the service of that unscrupulous mercenary, were appointed to a rendezvous with the English King, whilst hunting in the Forest of Passeleu. Circumstances, lady, strange as curious, had made me a tenant of a lone hermitage in which their conference was held; and I learnt enough to possess me with an idea that they knew something of your

from my house. When
they arrived the
sail and came up
sides in the circles
telling them, passing
papers. Some is
written as in the pe
signature. They wish
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and traced the capital
Israel. So much is
and so much was
the interest was for
undoubtedly to discov
er the truth she w
ingness I tried to ga
rds but failed. At

Provençal, and I sang him the songs of the country he loved so well. Once within the castle, however, all egress was denied me; I found myself obliged to take service as a musician there, and my task was to season the idle hours of a garrison apparently appointed to watch a state prisoner with the tones of my instrument. At length, from one of their own ward, I learned the secret of their prisoner. Oh, lady! how melancholy to reflect that beauty and royal birth should subject their possessor to the inheritance of a living tomb. But once gained access to her for whom this strict and guarded watch was kept up. Judge my surprise when I discovered the occupant of the cell to which I had introduced myself, immured in all her glorious beauty from the reach of heaven and the light of day, was Isoline la Bretagne, the daughter of Geoffrey Plantagenet, the sister of the murdered Arthur, whose dangerous proximity to the throne had rendered her a subject of hatred and fear to the English John. Ah! could I paint to you my feelings, my devotion, on beholding one so high-born and so lovely thus immured in hope-

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aped from his eyes; and then, without further notice, he passed him, and entered into conversation with Bertha.

Princes love neither to be interfered with in their amusements, nor disobeyed in the orders they give. The demeanour of the Dauphin was haughty and constrained in the presence of a third person. Any of his suit in the circumstances in which the minstrel found himself could have immediately retired, and left the field open to the royal visitor; but the fierce Blothaire, to whose heart all guile and sycophancy were strangers, in place of feeling himself an intruder, looked upon the visit of the Prince with a suspicious eye. He forgot all but his strong love for and his right to the exclusive guardianship of her his valour had preserved from destruction.

After rising from his knee on the Prince's entrance, he stood erect and proudly in his presence, regarding Lewis with so steady a gaze, that the royal visitor actually felt uneasy in his presence; and after a few hasty compliments and profession of service towards Bertha,



a rider bravely through the waters. The smaller horse of Adela was even better able to swim with his fair burthen; and snorting and lowing as they rose on the surface, the steeds turned off to the right, and, as the wave passed on, struck out over the marches towards Richmond.

"Attempt not to interfere with the horse now," said her guide, as he saw Adela cling to the reins in alarm. "Grasp firmly by the mane, and keep your seat. Leave the animal entirely to his own resources. I will manage to keep his head in the same direction my own horse is taking."

"Nay, but we are leaving the beacon you just now pointed out," said Adela, as she followed his advice, and clung to her horse's neck.

"'Tis no matter," returned her companion; "we could not now regain the road. The horses will of their own accord make for the nearest land; their instinct teaches them in such a situation to do so."

At this moment the clouds rolled beneath the moon, and they were enveloped in gloom.

The sea-bird screamed as he flapped past them; whilst, in the distance, rose the continued roar and din of strife from the town they were leaving.

"My God!" exclaimed Adela, "but this is indeed fearful; we have surely turned, and are going out to sea. I can discover nothing around me but dark waters. How short a time is now given us in this world! How fearful the dark death before us!"

"Keep up your courage, Lady," returned the guide, "and all will yet be well. The horses have turned; they have scented the fresh grass, here away on the left, a nearer point than that they first made for. 'Tis the further bank of the river Stour. Hold on firmly but lightly, and fear not."

Her guide was right in his conjecture. The horses made for the bank of the river, whose course ran beneath the walls of Richborough, and wound round towards Sandwich. It was now only to be distinguished by the rapidity of its current, and, in a few moments, the animals were crossing it. The Cavalier now showed his perfect horsemanship, which had

at him the management of a steed, when
e water, as well as on dry land. The
-current of the rapid river made it ex-
ly dangerous to cross during the flood-
and the horses were puzzled, as they
l themselves whirled about in its eddies.
turned with the stream, and would have
ed its tortuous course, and been again
ed far out amongst the marshes, but the
ul guide, bidding Adela still cling firmly
e mane, turned the head of his own horse,
e slightest pressure of the rein, towards
bank, and, at the same time, drew her
after him.

vice his charger gained footing upon the
r bank, and twice he was swept back,
y rolling over, and striking down his
panion; and twice the rider brought
both back to a fresh attempt. Both
hands were fully employed in the effort,
nothing but the firmest seat could have
led him to keep the steed of Adela from
king away, or dragging him from his own
a. Once separated, and he felt that his
less companion would be quickly lost to



The first of these is the fact that the
the second is the fact that the
the third is the fact that the

the fourth is the fact that the
the fifth is the fact that the
the sixth is the fact that the


the seventh is the fact that the
the eighth is the fact that the
the ninth is the fact that the

the tenth is the fact that the
the eleventh is the fact that the
the twelfth is the fact that the

and explanations could be entered upon. The ruined and half-burnt town of Richborough, which stood just without the castle, near where they had landed, was no safe place near which to linger, a large detachment of the French being in possession. Under these circumstances, the Knight set about trying to recover the horse of his fair companion, which had safely landed some distance down the course of the river. Succeeding in his endeavour, he assisted Adela to mount, and was resolved to make for Dover Castle, with all speed.

Taking advantage of the vapour which at that period enveloped the marsh land, like a thick fog, they passed several parties in the road they traversed, and succeeded in gaining the thickets which led to the village of Wincborough, unmolested; passed through the small hamlet of Eastry, and dashed over the open wold towards Dover.

And who shall describe the feelings of the knight during that moonlight ride? He felt himself the champion and protector of one without whose society, the fairest scene in



should be indebted to
safety, than have seen
host. Such is the love
the influence of that most
a lovely scene passed the
beloved,—danger and a
charm,—is never forgotten
moonlight slept upon
which the watch-fires
burnt ! How soft the
dershire darkened upon
well did the exquisite find
upon her steed, matchless

CHAPTER XX.

DOVER CASTLE.

All Kent hath yielded; nothing there holds out,
But Dover castle.

SHAKESPEARE.

A PERIOD of some months may be supposed to have elapsed since the transactions recorded in our last chapter.

Short as was that period, events of mighty import had happened in poor, unhappy, and distracted England.

The Dauphin had spread his colours, and beat his drums over the land. Marching through Kent, he besieged and took the strong castle of Rochester, crossed the Medway, and, without opposition, reached London, where the assembled Barons tendered him their homage.

All the castles and strongholds in Essex, Norfolk, and Sussex had surrendered; and after mercilessly wasting these several coun-



midst of its multitudinous defences; and the rocky hill itself, on which the fortress stands, seems to bid defiance to the power of man. On the land side, and towards the sea, it descends in a perpendicular and fearful precipice of more than three hundred and twenty feet.

“The murmuring surge,
That on the unnumber’d pebbles chafes,
Cannot be heard so high.”

The mighty import attached to the possession of Dover Castle had caused the Dauphin to retrace his marches through Kent, in order to lay siege to it; and baffled by Hubert de Burgh, he wasted the time there which might have been employed to greater advantage elsewhere.

The Prince, indeed, who was somewhat wayward and tetchy in temper, had so entirely set his mind upon making himself master of this fortress, that hastening on, he had somewhat surprised Hubert, many of whose forces were at the moment engaged in predatory excursions, ravaging the lands of the revolted Barons. The Dauphin made his approaches nearly in a straight line to the foot of the bridge, casting up a bank on the right side of

his works at the sharpest part of the hill, where it begins to turn towards the north. With the chalk cast out of the line of approach his miners raised a sufficient bank to cover the assailants from the dreadful showers of arrow poured on them from the towers between the cliff and the Constable's quarter: whilst the old Saxon ditch protected them from the archers on the north side until they approached the castle-gate.

Nothing, perhaps, which the mind of man can conceive could come up to the magnificent sight of the siege of this fortress. Let the reader picture to himself the splendid encampment of the foreigner in the valley below, gorgeous with banners and the tents of the English barons, together with the works carried up by the Dauphin, crowded with iron men, and then the towering fortress, its walls bright with arms, the lion of England fluttering upon its grey Keep, and the gonfalons of the various knights and chieftains who commanded in each tower.

Let him then imagine those venerable Roman and Saxon trenches which circle the heights

the soft breeze of June waving the long grass upon their surface, filled as they were with men-at-arms looking down upon the assailants below. Let him next cast his eye upon wall, and tower, and barbican glittering with knights and gentlemen in harness of the crusades, and in all the pride of their castle's strength,

“ Laughing the siege to scorn.”

So poorly was the King stored with friends at this moment, that Hubert, all popular as he himself was in Kent, had but a thin garrison wherewith to defend the numerous works, many knights and men of note, who ought, by virtue of the tenure by which they held their lands, to have been at their station in the castle, having failed to come in.

Notwithstanding these disadvantages, the faithful Hubert, rendered doubly vigilant by the peril of his situation, and obliged to place even the very servants of the castle upon the walls and towers, beat off the forces of the Dauphin with terrible slaughter in every fresh attempt they made.

In no reign, when we take into considera-



ivity ever since the night she had been rescued by Clothaire from the horrors of the siege of Sandwich. To all his advances, however, the lady had replied with the utmost indignation. The royal lover, who considered himself too high-born to be repulsed by the daughter of a Kentish knight was terribly indignant at this rejection of his suit. But he had to learn the crushing scorn in which the proud English maiden held even a prince of France, who, taking advantage of the accident of her capture, presumed to lisp words of dishonour in her ear.

Considering Clothaire his successful rival in the lady's affections, he had for some time treated that youth with marked neglect, and on the first opportunity determined to compass his ruin.

Matters of import had, however, so fully occupied the Prince up to the present time that he had no leisure to think of his own private affairs. Meanwhile the Knight of Daundelyonne and his daughter had remained prisoners in his hands.

To one of so high a spirit as Clothaire the



CHAPTER XXI.

THE SOUNDING WELLS OF THE CASTLE.

Fluellen, you must come presently to the mines; the Duke of Gloucester would speak with you.

To the mines! tell you the Duke, it is not so good to come to the mines. By Chesu, I think, 'a will plow up all, if there is not petter directions.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE ancient towers of Dover Castle took their names from the several knights and nobles who, at the time of the Conquest, and in subsequent reigns, were appointed to keep watch and ward in them. Of Valance Tower, Godwin's Tower, Peveril's Tower, Harcourt's Tower, Clinton's Tower, Magimot's Tower, Colton Gate, and many other of the more ancient buildings of the castle, hardly a trace remains. Their very names, like the knights who guarded them, have almost vanished from the memory of man.

It is night, and the moon shines upon tower, turret, cliff, and circling wall, of the fortress.

anti-west side and
the garden walls lead
in this direction.
In the body of another
house the garden
walls, reaching with
movement below. I
could command the
man's apartment, show
around the hill on
The deepest silence in

The helmet of the
the river partially covered
yet through the rain
that his features were

the surcoat and device upon his shield, and the glittering harness which covered his fine limbs, and which shone with every change of movement like the folds in a serpent's skin, proclaimed the wearer of knightly rank.

Suddenly the attentive ear of the Knight distinguished a light footstep approaching from within the arched walls. Quitting his position he advanced to meet the sound, and was joined by a lady, lovely as the Goddess of Spring. It is plain the pair are lovers; and amidst the uncertainty of war, the grassy trenches and the massive walls are to be the mute witnesses of their mutual vows.

"And you can then forget all?" said the maiden; "your own high station and renown for one so poor, so unworthy as myself; for one the history of whose early life was made up of neglect, grief, and misery, nay, perhaps of crime."

There was something indescribably sweet in the voice and manner of the speaker, and in the expression of her lovely countenance, as she gazed into the face of the Knight beside her.

"I can forget all but my strong love for

the face of another, a
law, a common school-
house."

"I forgive all," said
all but the agony I have
seen here and joy left
it earth faded from my
heart as we without t

"And such is the
morning, as she looked
"In the midst of death
upon the joys of the w
us here, and behold t
man for the destruction
your fair valley filled
thousands are cranks

At this moment the quick tramp of heavy feet was heard advancing from the souterrain-gate, within the fortress.

"Hark!" said the Knight, "the Governor makes his rounds. We must part, dearest Adela. Quick, bless me with your answer—say you will be mine."

"I do," replied Adela. "But remember! there are perils to be encountered ere we meet again. I go to save a brother's life, whilst you——"

"Nay, I am to play my part in the scheme which you will not fully explain," returned her lover. "Be it so; I take the post assigned to me. And when the moment arrives, yonder Frenchmen shall find enough to do in their camp."

The next moment the lovers separated, and Adela joined the faithful Gondibert, who had been in waiting to escort her to the Monks'-gate, a building whose apartments were dedicated to many of the ladies in the fortress during the siege, and which being nearly opposite the tower over Eastbrook-gate, was secure from attack at that part of the Castle, as the



The first of these is the fact that the
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a fortresses. At Dover Castle there were several sounding wells, for the purpose of letting down persons to listen if miners were at work.

At this period a curious species of punishment was often resorted to, in connexion with these sounding wells. As it was extremely dangerous to descend, without first making trial of the air in their horrible depths, it was customary to compel criminals, condemned for some breach of trust or treachery, to adventure first. If the unhappy wretch survived, the service was considered an extenuation of the crime.

When Hubert, together with Lord Folkstone and their attendants, had descended into the vault beneath the tower, and the machinery had been made ready for descending the well, a couple of men-at-arms led forward a criminal whose arms were pinioned. The prisoner was a thick-set and extremely powerful, though somewhat deformed man. He was, indeed, our old acquaintance De Bossu. As soon as his arms were unpinioned, he was conducted to the edge of the well, and ordered to seat him-

man with a dark stea-
dy gaze no other sort of
man strikes his firm nerv-
ous in a short time
with horror. - It is the
man shuddering. - I see the
numbered with the dead
and have seen to their ac-
counting this ? he asked,
and addressing Herbert : “
upon the rack or hanging from
the gallows.”

- You must take the ch-
ilders. - without one minute
at the heaviest crimes, y

“descend, sirrah, by the rope before you, or by Heaven I will have you cast down headlong.”

The ruffian saw it was of no avail to hold further parley ; he took the rope in one hand and a torch in the other, and seating himself, was lowered into the well, whilst the spectators watched the event in breathless expectation. The well was full two hundred and fifty feet in depth, and as the wretch descended, its horrors were rendered more apparent by the torch he carried. Above him all was dark, and as the flaring light danced about in the murky atmosphere, it gradually became like a twinkling star. At length, when three parts down, its light was no longer visible, and as the listeners bent over the mouth of the well, a rushing sound was heard, followed by a dull, heavy fall.

“His crimes are over,” said Hubert, “he has met with foul air ; we must cast down quick-lime.”

After this had been done, a light was again lowered, but this time by itself ; it reached the bottom without being extinguished, and then one of the miners prepared to descend.

Firmly secured to the rope, the miner had a

smaller cord given him with which he could make signal of his wishes; he was then lowered into the well.

When he had descended about half way, he made a signal to be allowed to remain stationary, and a quarter of an hour elapsed.

During this time the listeners at the mouth of the well could plainly distinguish a faint dull sound, deep in the earth—a sort of scraping noise accompanied by the sound of blows, so faint and dull as to be scarcely perceptible, and at length the miner pulled the rope as a signal that he wished to ascend.

“These cunning Frenchmen have a mine here,” observed Hubert.

“They have,” said the man, “it is meant for this tower.”

“How far do you judge them to have progressed?” inquired Hubert.

“Within about twenty feet,” replied the miner.

“So near!” said Hubert, “but ’tis no matter; I will circumvent them;” and the party ascended from the vault.

"My Lord of Folkstone," said Hubert, apart to that nobleman, "we will take these cunning Frenchmen in their own trap. There is a passage which must nearly intersect their mine. I will break through and take every soul of them. Meanwhile, as there is doubtless a jealous eye kept upon your tower, you must take your chance in it, and keep all secret from the men under you."

"But if the tower stands," said Lord Folkstone, "I claim your promise to be allowed to head the sally we have agreed on, in order to aid our friends below; I am pledged to it, to one you would not wish me to deceive."

"I will not break my word," replied Hubert. "If you live and my mind hold, you shall lead the party."

"So that one way or other," said Lord Folkstone, laughing, "I stand a chance of speedily paying a visit to yonder Dauphin in his trenches."

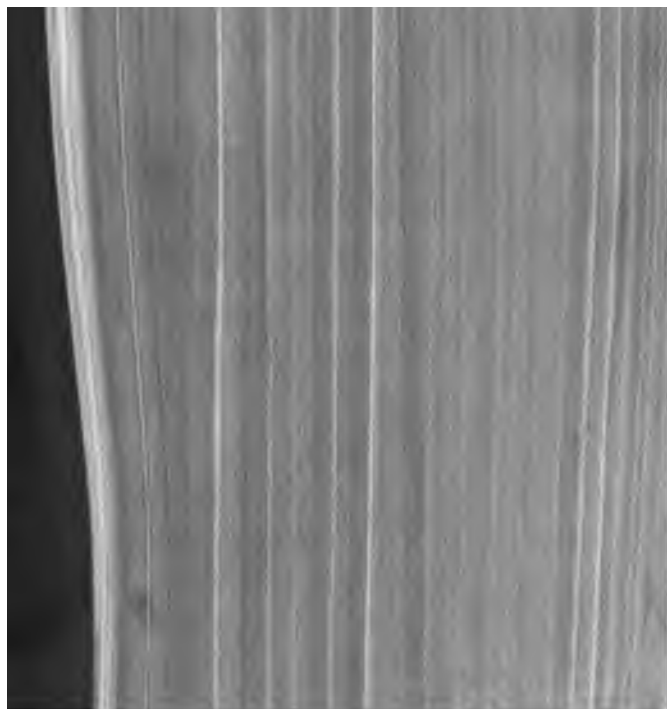
"'Tis the chance of war," returned Hubert. "Good night, my Lord."

During the siege of Dover Castle, the Dauphin occasionally occupied a small building in

the town which had belonged to the Templars. It was in the house in two years before had given an old Pandolph the Legate of the Pope resigned his crown to him. Always of a warm temper, the Dauphin while he was held in check before the Castle symptoms of a stubborn and morose temper, occasionally giving way to a violent temper which made those who were about as uneasy in his company as if they were on the edge of a volcano. Towards the nobles who had been driven to the alternative of inviting him over, his temper and tact especially displayed in every occasion the Prince had shown a preference of his own countrymen, and revolts, as they were termed, began to fill the situation, whilst tending the steps of the foreigner, and fighting against acquaintances, kindred, and former allies, anything but enviable. Theirs was but a melancholy success, even when successful. Their eyes on the toil of battle, were destined to behold the spoiled fields of their native land cul-

with the carcasses of steeds and knights, with whom they themselves should have stood en-ranked against the invader. The rapacious wolf and the crow devoured the unburied body of the yeoman who had fallen by the sword of his own lord. The reeking pest which sprang from the field of strife was from their own kith and kin—slain in opposition ; whilst their reward seemed but cold favour and distrust from him they sought to serve.

Among others who began to grow dissatisfied with the behaviour of the Dauphin, was Wolstane Fitz Adda, with whom our readers have already been acquainted as the outlaw of Poicteau. This bold man, whose hatred against John had led him, since his return to his native land, to do good service to Lewis, claimed of the Prince neither lands nor dignities, but merely that his long-lost son, whom, through his friend Gondibert, he had lately discovered in the person of Clothaire, might be pardoned, and restored to favour. The Prince, however, was inexorable ; he was jealous of Clothaire, and although many of the English barons, who had formerly known Fitz Adda, had made it



here, whom it might take us too much time and trouble to quench. By St. Denis ! 'tis a terrible spirit. I marvel, Monseigneur, you can so easily forget how his lance struck you from your saddle in the lists of Chinon, in Touraine. *Mort de ma vie!*—you rolled upon the plain as if shot from a catapult.”

“I bear not ill-will to the brave, before whom my arm has failed,” returned the Viscount Melun. “And does your Highness mean to execute the brother of Hubert de Burgh the same day ?”

“Unless yonder fortress be delivered,” said the Dauphin, “the brother of its governor dies.”

“And what terms does your Highness grant the garrison ?” inquired the Viscount Melun.

“None whatever,” answered the Dauphin ; “unconditional surrender. By heaven ! I will massacre every man, woman, and child in that pestilent fortress. Let a messenger be despatched to Hubert de Burgh with this message. The catiff Mauluc, who hath deserted the falling fortunes of John, in order to curry favour with ourself, will be a fitting messenger.

Let him mark well the state of the fortress whilst there."

Since the arrest and confinement of the youthful Clothaire, he had remained in a state of the deepest grief and misery. With his vows of love returned, his parentage discovered,—happiness just within his reach,—he had been suddenly snatched from the world and its brightest joys, and plunged into a dungeon beneath the gloomy cloister of the Abbey of St. Mary.

The Dauphin had displayed a paltry spirit towards one he had so lately admired, and upon whom he had bestowed honours. But jealousy and sharp envy now haunted the breast of the Prince; and when once these passions gain an ascendancy in the hearts of those who wear the diadem, they are generally fatal in their effects.

The accomplished Clothaire was doomed to die, and already the world seemed lost to him. Except that he was uncoffined, he was as one already in the tomb: next to being bricked up in the convent wall, to which its depths had

often been the prelude, his cavernous cell was as hopeless a prison. In those days of splendour and active life, the reverse from the bright and open world to the cold dungeon was great indeed, and as Clothaire lay prostrate upon the chill earth he was a prey to the deepest grief. Days and weeks had passed whilst he remained in this situation, when one night his door opened and his jailer introduced into his cell a monk, accompanied by a youth clad in the costume of a page.

"These are the last visitors you will look on," said the jailer, "therefore, make the most of them; half an hour is all I can allow you;" saying this he retired.

The Minstrel started as the Monk raised the torch he took from the jailer's hand, and gazed around the slimy vault and then let its glare fall upon the features of the unhappy tenant.

"A miserable lodging," said he, "for one who had but a short time back a prince to profess regard for him. But men know better what they hate than what they love," said the Monk pushing back his cowl, and displaying the countenance of the jester Gondibert.

"Si enim" etc.
well be it as Co
in reason I should
- You may see d
- Answer - in I must
a year or so and there
without who will be
him."

As comments on
inward and a few
lines and since could

CHAPTER XXII.

THE TABLES TURNED.

But hear me this :

Since you to your regardance turn my faith,
And that I partly know the instrument
That screws me from my true place in your favour—
This your minion, whom I know you love,
Him will I tear out of that cruel eye,
Where he sits crowned in his master's spite.

SHAKESPEARE.

HAD ambition still been the ruling passion of Bertha Daundelyonne she would now have had an opportunity of gratifying it, since Lewis had become so deeply enamoured of her that he offered to shower titles and dignities upon herself and the Knight, her father, provided she would consent to entertain his suit. But Bertha had had quite enough of ambition ; she looked upon the Prince's attentions as cruel and insulting, and continued to repel him with scorn. Repulsed thus, both in love and war, the Dauphin determined to try the

effect of severer measures than he had hitherto used. It was rather too much, he thought, after all his efforts against the heart of the fair Bertha and the walls of Dover, to be thus baffled. He resolved that the English were an obstinate race and must be treated accordingly.

The repulse he had met with from the object of his love affected him even more than his reverses in war. The presumption of Clo-thaire he considered excessive, and so was his thirst of revenge. His pride and self-conceit magnified the person, who he considered had obstructed his success and lessened his self-importance, into a monster of ingratitude. One evening, after a prolonged visit to Bertha, during which he had pressed his suit with all the vehemence of passion, the Prince's manner suddenly changed; he took a hasty leave of the lady, and with "jealous leer malign," descended to the cloisters of the abbey, where he continued to pace up and down for some hours a prey to the most gloomy and revengeful feelings.

The shadows of night still found him mood-
and meditative amongst the gloomy cloister

The dark and deathlike locality and the echo of his own footsteps, giving a more sinister turn to his thoughts. As the moonbeams partially illumined the dark arches and ivy-clad pillars, his thirst of vengeance, in place of giving way to better feelings, in a neighbourhood so calculated to excite them, increased, and he determined to pay off the score which his littleness and vanity had been running up against his rival. Dismissing the mounted guard which attended him whenever he rode, and which had remained drawn up before the abbey-gates, he sent for Bertha and again held a long conversation with her.

"And how, lady," he said, after a pause, "if I proceed to extremities? Remember you are in my power here."

"The descendant of the Saxon Offa, King of Mercia, knows how to die," replied Bertha; "she brooks not dishonour."

"The proudest dames of France would feel honoured by my preference," observed the Prince

"One so happy in the favour and esteem of the ladies of France," returned Bertha, "might,

But 'tis vain to hold
I well know the cause
by St. Denis I swear
in your cruelty, I v
yours, this Clothaire,
is designated, to be e

- If Clothaire be
power." said Bertha,
mean spirit in so doi
neither will I credit,
life and being from
would prove himself :

- Ha." exclaimed
me, Lady! But, by
drive me even to gr

As the prisoner was led into the cloisters, Bertha threw herself at the Prince's feet, and besought him to have mercy. "You cannot mean this, my Lord," she began. But the Prince was inexorable.

"I give you one minute to consider my proposals, Lady," he said, "or bid your lover an eternal farewell."

As he turned from her, the Dauphin signed to one of the men-at-arms to approach.

"Let one of the monks of the abbey be summoned to attend here," he directed, "to prepare the prisoner for death; and when I give the signal by raising my cap, do you strike the blow. If he resist, let him be hacked to pieces."

The man-at-arms bowed, and hastily withdrew. Again Bertha threw herself on her knees before the Dauphin, and solicited mercy.

"'Tis yourself must be merciful," replied the Prince to this appeal, "else, by the Holy Virgin, he dies."

Meanwhile the prisoner, who had stood quietly with the hood of his doublet drawn over his face, knelt down, and the monk pro-

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been torn from his shoulders, and, as the man-at-arms sprang forward and drew back his keen weapon in order to plunge it into the unhappy youth's heart, he suddenly stopped, and seemed transfixed with astonishment.

The Dauphin was equally puzzled. It seemed to him that a miracle had been wrought in favour of the object of his hate, or perhaps to save the religious edifice from being stained with blood.

To all appearance Clothaire stood before him; there were the chiselled features and elegant form of the youth. But in the long brown locks, which, falling over shoulders and neck, rendered even more dazzling the snowy bosom which the rude hands of ruffians had so suddenly revealed to view, the prince beheld

“A maid confessed in all her charms.”

However much the Prince felt astonished at this sight, and indeed for some moments his eyes were riveted upon the lovely form of Adela Fitz Adda, he had but little time for explanation or inquiry. A sound of strife and contention was to be distinguished without,

AND THE GREAT IMMENSITY OF THE ARMY FOR WHICH THE BARONS WERE NOW MUSTERING.

AT THE SAME INSTANT SEVERAL SIGNIFYING LETTERS WERE SENT FROM THE KING REQUESTING AS HE WAS WELL KNOWN, THAT ASSISTANCE WAS AT THE INSTANT REQUEST OF THE BARONS. THE KING AND HEIRS THEN BEING LIKE A PATRIOT IN THE FACT, AND WAITING THE FAVORABLE MOMENT ON WHICH STRIKE SHOULD BE PRESENTED, AND THE NEXT MORNING THE GREAT BATTLE COMMENCED. A FEW MOMENTS MORE, AND THE BATTLE WAS FIED WITH GREAT RAGE, AND THE VICTORY WAS FOR THE MOST PART IN THE HANDS OF CHAUCER.

THE ENGLISH WERE NOW PROCLAIMED THAT THE KING AND HIS WIFE WERE IN A STATE OF CONFUSION FOR THAT THEY ALL WERE IN GREAT NOISE AND STRIFE. THE ENGLISH THEN SUDDENLY MADE A SALLY. THEY THEN ENTERED IN CONSIDERABLE FORCE THROUGH ONE OF THE GREAT PASSAGES OF THE CASTLE, AND THE LORD OF FULHAM, AT THE HEAD OF A BODY OF KNIGHTS, SPURRING THROUGH THE CAMP, AND COMMITTED TERRIBLE SLAUGHTER; WHILE ANOTHER PARTY HAVING SUCCEEDED IN FIRING MANY OF THE TENTS, THE FLAMES SPREADING, ONE QUARTER OF THE ENCAMPMENT WAS QUICKLY DESTROYED.

The scene of strife and blood quickly extended. The siege, which for the last few days had seemed to be wrapt in a treacherous slumber, suddenly broke out in all its terrors. Rampart, wall, and tower, trench, and mound, and slope, were now alive with actors.

Catapult, petary, wear wolf, and every sort of engine, began to play, and showers of huge stones and all sorts of missiles to fly through the clear air, whilst the different shouts and war-cries of the leaders pierced the night's dull ear.

The camp of the besiegers was in the direst confusion, which was for some time the more imminent, that a cry had arisen that the Dauphin was nowhere to be found, and he was supposed to have been killed.

Whilst this scene was enacting in and around the camp, a singular conflict was at the same time going on deep in the bowels of the earth. The secret mine at which the besieged had been so long working, they had succeeded in carrying beneath Harcourt's tower. Having propped up the roof by beams smeared with grease, they were about to ignite these props,



The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for the success of any business and for the protection of the interests of all parties involved. The document then goes on to describe the various methods and procedures that should be followed in order to ensure that all transactions are properly recorded and accounted for.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

WHICH ENDS THIS STRANGE EVENTFUL HISTORY.

Now is Cupid a child of conscience :
He makes restitution.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE morning which followed the foregoing events found the French commanders in a state of the greatest fury. The courage and resolution of Hubert seemed the more provoking, that whilst they themselves lost their time before Dover, several of the English Barons, at the head of another army, had reduced the castles of Berkamstede, Hertford, Cambridge, Norwich, and Oxford, and subdued the greater part of the country of the East Angles. The Dauphin himself was in a transport of rage at the terrible slaughter Hubert had inflicted upon his army during this night attack; and again he swore, by all the saints in the calendar, that he would never rest till he had



1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses, which are arranged in a columnar format. The names are written in a cursive script, and the addresses are written in a more formal, printed style. The list appears to be a directory or a roster of some kind.

2. The second part of the document is a series of short, handwritten notes or entries. These are written in a cursive script and are arranged in a columnar format, similar to the first part. The notes appear to be related to the names and addresses listed above them.

3. The third part of the document is a series of short, handwritten notes or entries. These are written in a cursive script and are arranged in a columnar format, similar to the first part. The notes appear to be related to the names and addresses listed above them.

4. The fourth part of the document is a series of short, handwritten notes or entries. These are written in a cursive script and are arranged in a columnar format, similar to the first part. The notes appear to be related to the names and addresses listed above them.

5. The fifth part of the document is a series of short, handwritten notes or entries. These are written in a cursive script and are arranged in a columnar format, similar to the first part. The notes appear to be related to the names and addresses listed above them.

bled in the principal apartment of the Keep consisted of many renowned in their day for participation in this glorious defence, but whose names, and the evenescent symbols upon whose shields, have long been obliterated from the memory of man.

The stately forms of warriors, clad in their iron harness, and ready at any moment of alarm to fly to the walls, was relieved by the presence of youth and beauty, several ladies being amongst the throng.

The stern look of the aged knight, whose pent-house brow and furrowed cheek spoke of experience in former fields, and anxiety from the present hour, and who whispered apart whilst he watched from the narrow window, was varied by the joyous glance and lightsome laugh of the more youthful cavalier, as he held converse with the lady of his heart.

On this night, a sort of revel, or harnessed masque, was to be held in the principal apartment of the Saxon keep. It was a bridal entertainment, which the brave Governor had determined to give in honour of the marriage of two of his officers; and, notwithstanding

the siege of the castle was proceeding with all its fury, the ceremony was to take place in the old Roman chapel of the fortress, at midnight.

The attempt at describing an assembly held in such a hall under such circumstances, and at this ~~unhappy~~ period, would be in vain. In our own more civilized and peaceful days, a ball so given would perhaps be considered out of season. But in the middle ages, "delightful meetings and merry meetings" were oftentimes held amidst the stern alarms of war. The knights met in a moment in the brilliant hall in the very summer eve which they stood amidst the hurrying shower upon the walls. Bright eyes and red cheeks were doubly expressive, when they were directed towards the proud hero of the recent conflict, who would perhaps be called from his lady's side to repel the assailants in the breach: nay, perhaps to fight, and fall in defence of her from whom he hurried. The very hour was more precious, the minstrelsy doubly sweet, which was enjoyed amidst the peril, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war. At the present time, every seat of dinner-hall

been put in requisition by the Governor, to add to the festivity of the hour, whilst not a particle of the accustomed vigilance of the garrison was relaxed. The knights engaged in the dance, were in an instant prepared for the walls, and even the two bridegrooms, whilst they conversed with the ladies of their choice, held themselves ready to exchange the soft glance of love for the angry shout of war without.

Amidst all the romance of such an assembly, however, perhaps our lady readers of the present day would have shuddered at the appearance of the apartment in which it was held. The floor was strewn with rushes; and whilst the measure of the dance was kept to the sound of drum and trumpet, in the absence of more peaceful instruments, the glittering armour of sentinels posted upon the flights of stone steps which led to the narrow openings commanding the space without, showed the strict watch that was kept, even in the very stronghold of the fortress. The wind from these windows or openings, caused the torches and iron lamps with which the apartment was lighted, to flare

in the autumnal night blast as it blew in
 storm and rain through the chamber. But
 when the sun was shining felt or thought of
 it the year in those early times: and eve-
 nings as they sat at table were glad to play
 their last round games in place of the soft ca-
 sually which is found under the board of
 chessmen in the present day.

A slight description of the apartment will
 perhaps give our readers a better idea of the
 scene which witnessed the scenes and ac-
 tions which were going on without. Knights at
 arms and the senseless rushes with
 their heads.

The thick-walled room which extended from
 end to end of the building, contained two
 openings or windows on the south-east, and
 one on the north-west sides. Those
 on the north-west were intended to defend the
 entrance of the gate in the court below; and
 the southern could command the whole space
 between it and the Keep, the besiegers being
 thus exposed to the arrows of a concealed
 enemy. The windows on the south-east
 commanded all the space between the gate

and that portion of the building called the Palace, and the stairs leading to the vestibule; and it would have been a desperate and fruitless attempt for an enemy to have endeavoured to force a passage, as they would have sacrificed their lives, without vanquishing the besieged.

These windows, or loop-holes, were constructed in so peculiar a manner, that they deserve especial notice. The openings in the wall, on the inside, were about eight feet wide; and a flight of stone steps led up to the window, gradually diminishing in width to the last step under the loop-hole, which was nearly three feet. By these steps, built in the wall, the archers ascended to the windows, which were near the top of the room, whence they could fire upon those without, being themselves free from danger, unless they stood immediately before the opening. Accordingly, they took their station on one side, so as to annoy the enemy in an oblique direction; thus making dreadful havoc upon the besiegers, without being themselves seen.

By this contrivance, likewise, it was impos-

was taken by Gondibert. Osebian with the hardy heart, found a representative in Clothire. Esclabor, the disguised, was enacted by the sometime Outlaw of Poicteau, now Lord of Fitz-Adda. The Lord of Folkstone took the character of the "Brown without joy;" whilst Dodinel the wild, Ferrant of the hill, Abilem of the desert, the ancient Knight of the hollow deeps, Malios of the thorn, Agravain the proud, and other Knights of the Chapter, found ready representatives in those present in the fortress.

The characters were the more suitable to the representatives and occasion, as a slight deviation from the arms and costume of the knights was all that was necessary. The crests being exaggerated, and the surcoats, shields, and devices altered, and the actors were fully equipped for the nonce, whilst Bertha Daundelyonne and Adela Fitz Edda the two brides, as the princess Esclairmonde and Childesine the Forsaken, their merlins on their gloves, and attended by a brilliant court of love, as they were led forth by Clothaire and Lord Folkstone, realized in that thick-ribbed

many circumstances ;
accordingly nothing
and gaiety of the ho
the action of the pi
acted to admiration
more youthful was
must be conceded t
hours of relaxation
danger, and hard
they were quite rig
the hall.

Amidst the brig
ever, there was one
stood upon the st
amongst the archer
with malignant hat

services to the Dauphin; and on promise of reward, had undertaken the perilous task of gaining admittance into the castle as a spy.

As well practised in disguises and tricks of deceit as a mountebank, Mauluc had successfully altered his outward favour, and by managing to gain service amongst the garrison as a common soldier, whilst engaged upon the walls and ramparts, and sheathed in armour from head to heel, had evaded discovery. De Bossu, who had also deserted John, and who had boldly presented himself to Hubert as a messenger from the English King, was to assist Mauluc in the plot; and as it was supposed the Governor would be fully occupied with the revels consequent upon the double wedding about to take place, the hour of its intended celebration had been fixed upon for the Dauphin's attempt at surprising the castle.

The plan was arranged for one party of the French to make a sudden onslaught upon the castle from the cliffs on the side next the sea, whilst Mauluc was to conduct a second into the heart of the fortress by the souterrain beneath Mowbray tower.

though you deserted me in that dreadful night, yet there was one true knight, you see, who succoured the distressed damsel in her need."

"And for that service," said Faulconbridge, "he has indeed reaped a reward—a reward I consider not to be equalled by all else the world can offer."

The tone of voice in which this was uttered was so different from the usual joyous style of the Knight, that Adela looked into his fine countenance with surprise.

"You are scarce yourself to-night, Sir Richard," she observed; "'tis seldom such high-flown compliments proceed from your lips."

"True," said Faulconbridge, "I confess myself somewhat too blunt in my converse with ladies; but with thee, Adela, who art so different from the vain butterflies of the world, I feel as I have never before felt. Pardon me if I confess, now that we may perhaps never meet again, that there was but one woman in the world who could have enthralled the heart of Faulconbridge. That woman must have been what thou hast proved thyself, Adela,



moment he had vanished from the apartment. When Faulconbridge had left the gay scene within the Keep, which he felt in his present mood unable to enjoy, he passed the quadrangle and sought the fresh air of the ramparts. The spirits of the son of Cœur-de-lion were seldom long under the influence of melancholy, but at the present moment an unwonted sadness possessed him. Nevertheless, as he paced the walls, he sought to reason with his grief and chase it from his heart. Some such thoughts as the witty Biron gives vent to in his contempt of the blind bow-boy passed through the brain of Faulconbridge, and, had he lived in a later age, he might perhaps have quoted the lines of the reckless courtier:

“O!—and I, forsooth, in love! I, that have been
love’s whip—

A very beadle to a humorous sigh—

And I to be a corporal of his field,

And wear his colours.”

“St. George against St. Cupid!” he said, “’tis too ridiculous,” and, with his huge blade under his arm, he descended from the walls, passed on amongst those deep trenches and

works, even yet pointing out the hand of the Roman engineer and architect, and taking his stand upon the cliff which beetles over the sea, looked over the main of waters towards the opposite coast. As he stood upon the verge of the rocky height, he suddenly became aware of a suppressed sound, as if from some persons ascending the cliff.

When Cæsar made his first descent upon our island the waves washed the foot at this part of the height fronting the sea, and at the period of the Norman Conquest "the murmuring surge" still chafed the beach immediately below.

At first, Faulconbridge imagined the noise he heard was caused by the dash of the sea, but as he continued to listen, the night being still, he plainly distinguished human voices in consultation, and immediately conceived that a surprise was intended.

At this moment the glancing light of several torches and the sounds of many voices in the direction of the castle, announced that the bridal party were on their way to the church situated in the old Roman trench, and as

Faulconbridge turned his head to observe them, he saw several figures hastily but stealthily approaching the spot on which he stood.

Drawing back, he stepped aside a few paces, determined to mark the movements of these suspicious-looking figures.

The new comers were four in number ; they advanced to a part of the cliff near which Faulconbridge had just before stood, and on which was reared a small parapet.

The cliff at this part was so precipitous that no watch was kept for some distance along it, and after stopping and cautiously looking around them, three of the party proceeded to uncoil a thick rope they had brought with them, whilst the fourth fastened its end by a crowbar fixed across the turret. They then hastily threw the rope, which at intervals was furnished with small pieces of wood, over the cliff.

As soon as this was done three of the party immediately separated, and were lost to sight in the gloom, whilst the fourth remained leaning over the parapet, as if watching for those

THE HONORABLE THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON, D. C.
DEAR SIR:
I HAVE THE HONOR TO ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR LETTER OF THE
10TH INSTANT, AND IN RESPONSE TO ADVISE YOU THAT THE
MATTER IS BEING CONSIDERED.

THE ACCOMPANIMENT
OF THE
MUSIC

THE UNIVERSITY OF
MINNESOTA
LIBRARY

- The same was
the same from the
time - the same
I have never seen

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

"'Tis well," said Faulconbridge; "now draw your weapon and sever the rope."

The man shuddered, and hesitated; but whilst the towering form of Faulconbridge stood before him, he felt like an infant.

"Cut the rope, villain," repeated Faulconbridge, angrily, "or, by heaven, with one blow I will sweep thee over yonder dizzy height into the sea."

The soldier raised his arm, and cut at the rope. His own death, he felt, would, in all probability instantly follow the act; and so faint were his blows, that, after several ineffectual strokes, the cable still remained unsevered, and Faulconbridge, impatiently whirling his ponderous blade over his head, cut it through at a blow. A cry of horror, and a heavy sound as of many bodies falling, was immediately heard below.

"Now hearken," said Faulconbridge, hastily, "I might send you after yonder crushed reptiles, or by revealing your treachery to Hubert de Burgh cause you to be hung up to the highest tower of the castle; but I will do neither. This lesson of to-night you will not

“Keep your own counsel, and
 remember I know you. Love, such, and
 friendship is better.”

The son of Olear-de-Iron turned as he spoke, and with rapid strides took his way to the nearest chapel in which Hubert and the bridal train were assembled. He reached it just as the nuptials between Bertha Dondelyone and Olear-de-Iron, and Adela Fitz Aida and the Lord of Palastone were completed, and the parties were leaving the building.

At that moment the enemy made their assault, and the whistle of arrows and missiles and the din of weapons, and shouts and cries on every side, seemed to pierce the night's stillness.

The swords of the knightly train instantly flashed from their sheaths; and, after placing the ladies in safety, they hastened to the walls. It was fortunate that Hubert had entertained some suspicion of this attempt of the Dauphin, although he knew not the precise hour at which it was to take place. Consequently, the surprise was met by so ready a resistance, that, together with want of co-operation from those

who were to have climbed the heights, and made a diversion on the side next the sea, it completely failed, and wherever the French appeared, they were repulsed with dreadful slaughter.

Whilst some were slain in the dark, others were hurled back down the slope. A party, however, led by Walter Mauluc, managed to gain the high cliff fronting the sea, in the hope of finding there the friends who were to have met them. But the garrison made a sally upon them from the entrance into the castle, on the bank of the Roman ditch, and they were slaughtered to a man, Mauluc himself being taken prisoner.

The Dauphin, in the meantime, made a desperate effort to gain a lodgment in Albrinche's Tower, and for this purpose forced his way into the deep ditch of the north-east side of the castle. As the archers in the tower, however, could command a considerable length of the ditch, and near the opening in the galleries, there was a mæchecolation in the wall for pouring hot water, burning sand, and melted lead upon their heads, the Prince and his



humane and generous to a fault, but when called upon to be stern, no executioner could be more inexorable to the criminal his hand deprived of life.

The crime of Mauluc was one which the safety of the garrison demanded should be visited by a terrible example. The letters of the Dauphin were found upon his person, and the evidence of Faulconbridge was conclusive as to his guilt.

The wretched culprit, whose spirit in adversity was base and pusillanimous, as it was insolent and cruel in prosperity, threw himself upon his knees and begged for life in the most abject terms. But Hubert ordered him to be carried to the top of the lofty tower through which he had invited the Dauphin to make the attempt, and with the Prince's letters tied around his neck, he was placed upon a catapult, and hurled headlong into the trenches below.

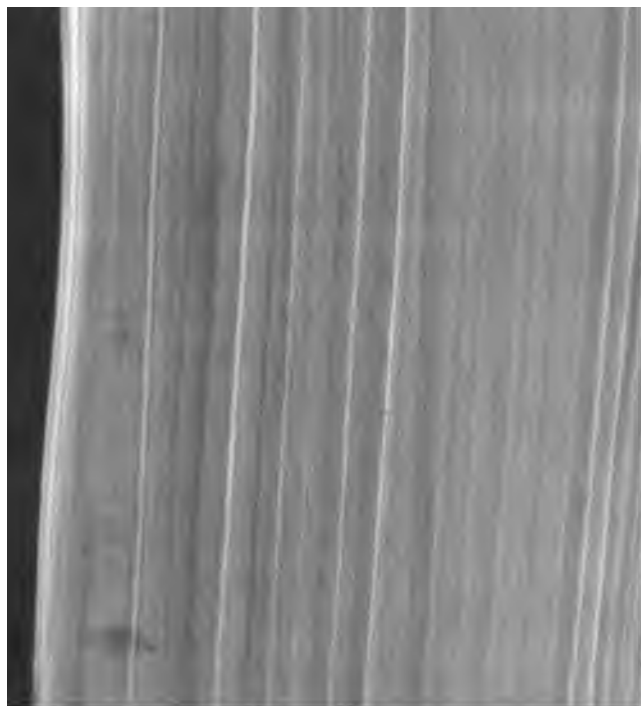
Our tale is now ended; and although it has been said by some witty writer, that all novels must conclude with the marriage of the hero and heroine, simply because all else would be

overmatched, and persuaded, on promise of safety to himself and followers, to capitulate. But his captors, and we almost drop a tear upon the words as we write them, were base enough to execute him!

END.













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